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# INFANT-BAPTISM 7 7172

## THE MEANS OF NATIONAL REFORMATION

ACCORDING TO THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE  
OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

IN NINE LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

BY HENRY BUDD, M.A.

RECTOR OF WHITE ROTHING, ESSEX.

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If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.—Isa. vii. 9.

Be not afraid, only believe.—Mark v. 36.

Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.—Mark ix. 24.

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THIRD EDITION.

WITH A PREFACE, IN WHICH IT IS DESIGNED TO VINDICATE BAPTISMAL REGENERATION FROM THE BASELESS ASSUMPTIONS OF PUSEYISM ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE FAITHLESS DISPARAGEMENT OF MODERN EVANGELISM ON THE OTHER.

CONCLUDING WITH AN ADDRESS TO DISSENTERS, CHURCHMEN,  
AND THE RIGHT REVEREND THE BISHOPS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

TO THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

To improve a community of natural men, united for the common advantages of social life, into a Communion of Saints, enjoying the privileges, discharging the duties, and encouraging the hopes of the Gospel, is the highest object at which both the Statesman and Divine can aim, though they should live in the most refined condition of society upon earth.

It is with this view, I conceive, that the State has instituted our Ecclesiastical Establishment ; and that it expects all, both Divine and Layman, to concur in advancing the kingdom of “ the Christ of God,” as the highest possible attainment that can make the subjects of the realm truly happy, whether here or hereafter.

This kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom ; and does not proceed from any native moral power

or goodness of man whatever ; it is founded on the assumption of man's utter worthlessness and sinfulness before God : it is eminently the kingdom of PROMISE, a kingdom of mere mercy, and love, and grace, and peace.

On this principle I conceive, in perfect consistency with the genuine Gospel of Christ, the Established Church of these realms is built. It is assumed that every child introduced into her communion, is introduced in virtue of the PROMISE made to the children of believers : on this ground the Parents and Sponsors present the Child ; on this ground the Church receives the Child into the Communion of Saints ; and on this ground she commits the responsibility of educating the Child to the Sponsors, as interested in all the privileges of the PROMISE. On this ground she instructs him in her Catechism ; on this she prepares him to be confirmed by the Bishop ; on this he is interested in every subsequent formulary, and throughout all her Liturgy ; and on this ground she takes her leave of him, in the last act of kindness she can pay him in this world, when she gives " hearty thanks " to God, " for that it hath pleased " him " to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world."

The above statement is the argument of the present volume. It is the mode of blessing mankind revealed in the Bible,—salvation by PROMISE : and

it is the mode ESTABLISHED by the Legislature of the Land, consistently with the Bible, of making every subject a blessing to himself, his neighbour, his country, and an honour to his God. Let the education of our children be conducted on this principle, as it is carried into practice by our Church in her Baptismal Service, and its two kindred formularies, the Catechism, and Confirmation Service. We may then hope, that as faith pleads and acts on the PROMISE, God will bless his own mode of ameliorating the human character, and that our population shall not be a community of mere natural men, but a Communion of the Saints of God.

May the blessing of God smile on this weak effort to glorify his grace, and may every reader say, Amen.





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P. vi	line 3	for	Baptismsl	read	Baptismal.
P. clxxxv	— 16	note —	dynastry	—	dynasty.
P. ccxxvii	— 9	—	Sanders	—	Sanders's.
P. 118	— 13	insert “con” before	“fidence.”		
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P. 363	— 27	—	violation	—	violations.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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I CANNOT send this second edition into the world without blessing God for the quick circulation with which it has pleased him to favour the first edition of a work which is devoted to recommend to general acceptance the excellence of the great principle of the gospel—salvation by promise. May the same blessing rest also on this, and on every effort to commend his grace.

By one description of Readers the argument of the book is plainly mistaken, and indeed necessarily so; for no man can rise above his principles. An unspiritual mind can discern nothing in the water of the one Sacrament, and in the bread and wine of the other, but the natural elements presented to his outward eye. These act no faith on the word which gives spiritual effect to the Sacrament, because they know not what faith is. And hence they cannot ascend above the *opus operatum*, or the mere external observance. I have no hope that

such can understand the argument of the book, or behold it in any other light than as a confirmation of their own imperfect view of the Sacraments. For however acute the natural talents of man may be, however cultivated his mind by learning, or however extensive his acquirements, he is still a natural man with all his mental advantages ; and therefore “ receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” And as well may a man who has been blind from his birth, with all his acquired exquisiteness of touch, conceive the appearance of a fall of snow, as a natural man with every accumulated talent and acquirement conceive the nature of that divine faith which applies the promise of a covenant God to the soul.

There are many excellent persons, and these men of decided piety, who oppose the argument of the Book, on the ground that “ the spirituality of religion is inconsistent with Infant-baptism ;” or, in fact, that because grace is not discoverable in infants, therefore they have no grace. But this objection seems to me to strike at the very essence of the Gospel—salvation by promise. If salvation be of promise, as it is throughout, then only let a promise be given, and it is both the duty and privilege of the Believer to live by faith in that promise. Now it seems to me to be undeniably clear, that God has made promises of spiritual blessings to Believers and their children. And on this account, when the

Believer receives a child from God, it is his privilege to receive that child, not as a child of nature merely, but as a child of promise, entitled to spiritual benefits and blessings. To esteem him not to be a child of God before graces are evident in him, is to live not by faith, but by sight; not to trust to promise, but to trust to sense; not to honour God in covenant, but in accomplishment; not to trust his word for what that word is engaged to perform, but practically to distrust the word, by suspending our belief till we see it in its performance. And what is this, after all, but a life of sense and sight, rather than a life of faith and confidence? Whereas a Christian life is a life of faith—credit resting upon the divine word: and the most accomplished Believer, after the discharge of all his duties, the exercise of all his graces, and the enjoyment of all his privileges, must, at his last hour, look for comfort to the promise—‘ “ Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” Lord, thy promise is to coming sinners; I come as a sinner—save me.’ And why is not the promise to him and his children to be acted out in faith, as well as every other promise of the word of God?

Another description of persons, who demur at the argument of the Book, are those, who conclude that our expectations are unwarranted, in attempting to “improve a community of



natural men, into a communion of saints." They reason from the secret, rather than the declared will of God. And because it is said, that "a remnant shall be saved," and that "there is an election of grace," are withheld from proposing the Gospel as a universal remedy. To such, a large portion of Scripture seems to be mere dead letter: they oppose the *secret* will of God to his revealed will; and because the real Church of Christ consists of the "secret ones" of God, they see no meaning in "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Thus they elevate themselves into the throne of God, arrogate to themselves the "secret things" which "belong" to, and are eminently the attributes of "the Lord our God," while from the "things which are revealed," and "belong unto us and to our children," we are to derive no practical benefit. Thus they have resolved in their practice the great turning-point of faith, how a select Israel of God, is consistent with the offer of the Gospel to every creature. A point, which both the page of Scripture, and the general confession of the Saints, has placed far beyond the ken of the acutest reason; and which, it seems, ever has afforded, and ever shall afford, in this world, exercise for patient faith, and which never shall receive its complete development, till faith is matured into the full vision of intellectual blessedness before the throne of glory.

Others say, “ We can go with you part of the way, but we cannot go your whole length.” To such I can only reply, Once admit the principle—salvation by promise, as faith may apply the same—and when shall that faith cease to operate, from its apprehension of the first rise of salvation in the electing love of God before the world was, through the calling, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, and religious walk of the soul in time, to the final accomplishment of the promise in the complete beatification of that soul in the regions of glory? Only once embark at the fountain of grace, and where can you stop till you arrive at the confluence of glory?

I again commit the work to Him, to the honour of whose grace it is devoted, and implore Him to make it an instrument, however humble, of promoting His cause of free grace and sovereign mercy upon earth.

*March 1, 1828.*

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

IN WHICH IT IS DESIGNED TO VINDICATE BAPTISMAL REGENERATION FROM THE BASELESS ASSUMPTIONS OF PUSEYISM ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE FAITHLESS DISPARAGEMENT OF MODERN EVANGELISM ON THE OTHER.

MORE than twelve years have elapsed since the following work was first published ; and it would be unjust to Baptismsl truth, as apprehended by the Author, if he withheld the declaration, in publishing this third edition, that every passing year has confirmed him in his conviction of the rectitude of the sentiments advanced therein, as substantially exhibiting the truth of Scripture, of our Established Church, and of the Church of the Reformation.

The grievous and contradictory errors, which, during this season, have been gaining strength, till they have arisen into the full-blown malignity of evil, have strengthened the author's conviction, that Christianity is the religion of *promise*, as it is the religion of *grace* ; that Sacraments are the ratifications of the promises, and, like the seal affixed to an instrument, they are the confirmative

seals of the privileges and blessings which that instrument conveys. The Scriptures are the "instruments" or indentures which convey the promises : and the Sacraments are the seals which establish them, and by which, at every renewed reception of them, the Believer "sets to his seal that God is true." It is as great an error, therefore, on one hand, to confound the privileges with the seal, and confine them to it, as the doctrines of Puseyism do, restricting the privileges to the seal, without laying the promise as the foundation ; as it is in those who oppose that system, to teach us to believe in Baptism, as a supposition or hypothesis, by which the promise is made of no avail, for who can trust in an hypothesis ? either error vacates the reality of Baptismal blessings, and reduces the Institution of Christ, in his initiatory Sacrament of Baptism, as formally investing the Believer with the privileges of the Gospel, to a fallacy and a delusion.

I use the word Puseyism as I find it ; to designate a system, and from no disrespect to the person whose name it bears. Neither Dr. Pusey nor any Father either of the Ancient or Reformed Church, or any modern advocate for Baptismal blessings, can over-state the eminence of those blessings ; for they are all that the blood of Christ ever purchased, all that the Spirit ever shed on the faithful man, all that the everlasting love of the Father of mercies ever conferred on the souls of his elect. It is therefore impossible to over-

state them. But let them be Baptismal blessings indeed, faithful applications of the promise of a faithful God, blessings bottomed on the sure foundation of the word of God, not a mere superstructure, beautiful to the eye, but delusive to the grasp. To the best of my apprehension, Puseyism is the lofty column seen at a distance; it is all superstructure without foundation; it is indebted to the distance for its seeming existence; and as you approach it vanishes. I call the system therefore "the baseless assumptions of Puseyism."

On the other hand, what may be designated "Modern Evangelism," is that Evangelical school of our more recent times, which, though it is a school of real grace, does not arrive at the full-proof Scriptural grace of the Reformation; and especially of that Scriptural grace as exhibited in the doctrines of our Established Church. I know them by no other name than the Scriptural doctrines of the Reformation, as expressed by our Church in her accredited formularies. This full Evangelism never stops, till from his utter fall in Adam, of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth *always* contrary to the Spirit, Art. IX. wholly destitute of all "free-will," to "turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength, and good works, to faith and calling upon God," Art. X. Man is "predestinated to life," in "the everlasting purpose of God," "delivered from curse and damnation," as "chosen in Christ out of mankind," and "brought by Christ to ever-



lasting salvation, as a vessel made to honour." Art. XVII. Whereas the school of Modern Evangelism but loosely apprehends the doctrine of man's utter natural incapacity to good from his fall; and rarely insists on the completeness of his moral ruin; as loosely floats around the Articles of free-will, &c. but never arrives at the seventeenth, as the *cause* of our salvation. Thus the cause of salvation being obscured, if not obliterated by silence, and the free promise as the expression of it, being, though occasionally mentioned, not prominently insisted on, in such a ministry the Sacraments as seals of the promise are never duly apprehended or enjoyed as the privileges of the faithful and elect; and faith not being taught at all, or at best very sparingly taught, to regard them as seals of the promise, Baptism becomes a mere hypothesis, a supposition, a ceremony, a mere external admission into a dispensation, an institution of Christ to be observed by us because instituted by him; but from which faith is taught to expect nothing really spiritual or substantially gracious, as is evident from the fruits of this system which are merely nothing, "and by their fruits ye shall know them." And this I call the faithless disparagement of modern Evangelism.

And I conceive that this system does as truly vacate the blessedness of Baptismal Regeneration, as the Puseyism which it sets itself so strenuously to oppose. Both perhaps equally repudiate salvation by faith in the free promise of a covenant

God, who "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy." Rom. ix. 15.

Certainly even the present Evangelical Church of England does not hold the same sentiments on Baptismal Regeneration as the Evangelical Church of the Reformation. The Reformed Church in her days of actual Reformation had no doubts on this subject, but declared every adult or child baptised, to be, in her judgment of faith and charity, really regenerated. "The Priest says," over the adult this "Person is regenerate;" and over the child, "The Priest says," equally, "this child is regenerate;" and over every child publicly baptised, "the Priest says," "We yield thee hearty thanks Most Merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit;" and yet more expressly in "Private Baptism," it is declared, "this child is by Baptism regenerate." Our Church holds consistently with all the Churches of the Reformation the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, without doubt or hesitation. But the modern Evangelical world abounds with doubt on the subject; and deems it Popery to assert with our Church, and all the Churches of the Reformation, that either person is baptismally regenerated. And so far is this prejudice carried, that if in turning over the title page of a book, the words Baptismal Regeneration strike the eye; it is instantly closed as a subject finally settled, the assertor of which is condemned either of weakness or folly. The objector not pausing to consider his

own inconsistency, in belonging to a Church, which holds in express terms the doctrine he thus inconsiderately condemns. Nay so deeply is this impression felt, that the Christian world is by an Evangelical pen solemnly congratulated on the fact, that but few Ministers of our Church now hold the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

On the other hand the advocate of Puseyism is nothing more than the consistent assertor of the old self-called Orthodox School of Baptismal Regeneration, *ex opere operato*; placing the virtue of Baptism in the ceremony, the application of the outward element, the sign, the seal, without due reference to the thing signified; to the promise which is its spiritual privilege, or to faith which is the efficient applicant of the promise. For Puseyism is but the legitimate issue of ceremonious orthodoxy, and circumstantial preciseness. And while the mere Orthodox man startles at the abyss to which the legitimate issue of his own principles, fairly deduced, necessarily arrives; if divine grace do not in mercy open his eyes to the awful character of his condition, and incline him to return while yet he may; he will persist in abusing Puseyism as excessive with his lips, while both his principles and his practice will be giving it celebrity and confirmation by the Semi-Popish orthodoxy of his creed.

I am not writing a work but a preface; and with the blessing of God will endeavour to condense my remarks within the shortest compass that ap-

pears to me to be consistent with the integrity of truth; and may the Holy Spirit aid both the Reader and the Writer, and lead us into the way of truth and confirm us therein.

What is the Gospel then? and what is the use of its Sacraments? It is "the wisdom of God in a mystery?" 1 Cor. xi. 7. and the illustration of love in its richest exhibition—mercy: it is the salvation of a sinner in that way which should win him to accept salvation as his choicest happiness, and God's choicest blessing: and it is salvation by promise, that it may at once present God as the bounteous giver, and man as the attached and grateful receiver.

And it is salvation by promise, that it may be simply and wholly of grace towards man the recipient, and conspicuously "to the praise of the glory of his grace" Eph. i. 6. in God the giver. Adam would not believe the word of God in Paradise, but preferred the word of the devil to that of God. But that word must not be dishonoured: in the very way then in which man dishonoured and departed from God, in that very way shall he honour God and return to him. It is not therefore by works of obedience to the Law that he shall stand in Paradise, or by any works of obedience, whether of nature or grace, that he shall return to God after his fall. He fell from God by disbelieving his word; he shall return to God by believing his word; and give the word of God that honour in his return, which he refused to give it in his fall. The word of the Gospel there-

fore is, "Believe and live;" honour my word by giving it that credit now by faith, which you refused to give it when you were originally created.

Accordingly in the condemnation of the serpent, the most just and merciful God gave the word of promise to Adam, on which the Church of Christ has been built, on which it has rested, and on which its whole superstructure has been raised from that moment to the present hour, and shall so continue to be raised, till Christ "shall bring forth the head stone with shoutings," Zech. iv. 7. and the last Saint shall be matured in glory. It is not any power or holiness of man, or any obedience to a precept or legal rule, that is the least considered; or if considered, it is only to be repudiated and rejected; man is considered simply as a lost sinner to be saved by mercy alone. No appeal is made to his ability; but the richest provision is made for his inability in this word or promise of God made to man, in virtue of a Mediator. Thus in the words of Hooker, "the promise of eternal life is the seed of the Church of Christ."

If man then is to be saved by promise, it is quite clear, that no works of his whether good or bad, can have any thing to do with the reception of a promise. Love has no power of reception: zeal, joy, and obedience have no power of reception; repentance, prayer, or praise have no power of reception; all these graces and duties together have no power of reception. It is faith, and faith only,

that is the recipient of promise, its just and due correlative. For the promise of a faithful God finds its only correlative in the faith of believing man. It is love which gives the promise; it is faith alone which can accept it.

And that God may have all the glory of our salvation, and nothing may be left to the power of incapable man, this faith does not accept the promise as a *grace* but as an *instrument*. It is the hand which puts on Christ; and the reception is as truly such, whether the instrument be strong or weak: it is "like precious faith," whether it be strong or weak, as a spark is as truly fire as a flame: the hand of a child can receive the same diamond as that of a man; the virtue is not in the hand that receives, but in the diamond that is received: so the virtue is not in the faith that receives the promise, but in the promise that is received. Our Church speaks plainly on this point. "Almighty God commonly worketh by means, and in this he hath also ordained a certain mean, whereby we may take fruit and profit to our soul's health. What mean is that? Forsooth it is faith. Not an inconstant and wavering faith, but a sure, steadfast, grounded, and unfeigned faith. By this then you may well perceive that the only *mean* and *instrument* of salvation, required of our parts is faith; that is to say, a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God: whereby we persuade ourselves that God *both hath*, and *will* forgive our sins: that he hath accepted us again into his



favour: that he hath released us from the bonds of damnation and received us again into the number of his elect people, not for our merits or deserts, but only and solely for the merits of Christ's death and passion who became man for our sakes, and humbled himself to sustain the reproach of the cross, that we thereby might be saved, and made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. This faith is required at our hands." Hom. XXV. P. 2.

And as the Homily thus describes faith as the *means* and *instrument* "how to apply Christ's death and passion to our comfort;" so it thus describes the "*new covenant, and sure promise thereof.*" "This covenant and promise was first made unto Adam himself immediately after his fall; as we read in the third of Genesis, when God said to the serpent on this wise: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. He shall break thine head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Afterward the self-same covenant was also more amply and plainly renewed unto Abraham, when God promised him, that in his seed all nations and families of the earth should be blessed, &c. Hom. XXIV.

Such is the free promise of God in the new covenant of mercy, kindly given by God for man to apply and appropriate to himself by a living faith; and such is the faith which instrumentally applies it to each Believer's salvation; which faith is not of man's procuring, but is simply the gift

of God : “ for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Wherever this faith in the promise has been found there has been the Church of Christ throughout all ages. Accordingly from Adam to Abraham, the early Elders “ obtained a good report by it,” Heb. xi. 2. Abel, and Enoch, and Noah are especially celebrated for it by the Apostle : and doubtless “ the sons of God,” mentioned Gen. vi. 2, and all holy souls during the long interval from Abel to Abraham were admitted into their adoption of sonship, through faith in this promise, though no Sacrament appears yet to have been given as the pledge and seal to confirm it.

But about nineteen hundred years before the accomplishment of the promise, God made a special selection of one person, in whom, and in whose family as the channel, this promised Saviour was to descend. And that the character of the salvation as the result of promise, might never be effaced, to him has been given the distinguished appellation of the Father of the Faithful. And as the reward of his faith, a special covenant was established with him ; “ And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee,” &c. Gen. xvii. 7. And that this covenant regarded more than temporal blessings, and that the “ Old Fathers looked,” for more than “ transitory promises,” and a worldly Canaan, is evident



from the Apostle's declaration both with respect to Abraham and his posterity. "For *he* looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;" and "now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." Heb. xi. 10—16.

But while these promises of spiritual blessings in Christ were given to the Church, our heavenly Father, knowing the weakness of our depraved nature, and the difficulty of sustaining our faith in his promises, kindly and graciously ordained holy Sacraments as seals, and pledges, and signs, and means of grace, that we should have these "exceeding great and precious promises" always in remembrance. Or, as our Church expresses it, "To the end that we should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ thus dying for us, (which prime blessing is the great object of promise from the beginning,) and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained to us, he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries (or Sacraments) as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort." And so it declares again that in "the due use of the Sacraments," God "embraceth us, and offereth himself to be embraced by us:" and it gives, with Augustine, this "description of a Sacrament, which is, that it is a visible sign of an invisible grace; that

is to say, that setteth out to the eyes and other outward senses the inward working of God's free mercy ; and doth as it were seal in our hearts the promises of God." Hom. XXI. " In them," says Hooker, " it pleaseth Almighty God to communicate by sensible means those blessings which are incomprehensible. Seeing therefore that grace is a consequent of Sacraments, a thing which accompanieth them as their end, a benefit which they have received from God himself, the Author of Sacraments, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them ; it may be hereby both understood, that Sacraments are necessary, and that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural, is not in all respects as food unto natural life, because they contain in *themselves* no vital force or efficacy ; they are not physical but moral instruments of salvation—duties of service and worship ; which unless we perform as the Author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable."

Accordingly as a confirmation of these promises to the Father of the Faithful and his posterity, to whom the promises were made, God gave him the first Sacrament of Circumcision,<sup>1</sup> both as a per-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Pusey denies the spiritual efficacy of Circumcision ; " Yet itself (Circumcision) conferred nothing, it was no mean nor channel of spiritual grace," p. 321. Our Church as decidedly says, that it did. " And so was Circumcision a Sacrament—which sealed and made sure *in the hearts* of the circumcised the promise of God touching the promised seed that they looked for."

petual memorial and confirmatory seal of the promise “till the seed should come to whom the promise was made,” Gal. iii. 19. and in whose coming, saving efficacy, and death, the two first Sacraments found their typical completion: as it is expressly declared, “He gave him the covenant of circumcision,” and this covenant was practically applied and wrought out by Abraham and his posterity; for “Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day, and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs,” Acts vii. 8. And they begat the twelve tribes, the posterity of faithful Abraham; who also enjoyed the same Sacrament of Circumcision, till that Sacrament merged in one of brighter meaning and of richer hope instituted by the Saviour himself, when his Ministers were to go forth and disciple all nations, “baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;” thus literally accomplishing the promise that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed.

But two very important questions here arise. First, whether Circumcision was a Sacrament sealing spiritual blessings to Abraham and his posterity. Secondly, whether these blessings were not sealed to them as to *faithful* Abraham, and his *faithful* posterity; faith applying to them the covenanted promise?

First, it was clearly no Sacrament unless it sealed to them spiritual blessings. And can we believe that God intended no more than to be a

God in providence, when he gave him and his seed an everlasting covenant and promised, “ I will be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee ? ” and when he promised him “ all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession ? ” the Apostle tells us plainly that, “ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.” It was a spiritual Canaan, a heavenly inheritance which was proposed and promised to their faith, where the outward sign of excision intimated the spiritual excision of a corrupt nature as the due preparation. Circumcision therefore was a seal of a spiritual covenant, proposing to their faith as “ pilgrims and strangers upon earth,” Heb. xi. that heavenly inheritance, of which Canaan was but a type, and of which character there are repeated intimations both in the Old Testament and the New. The language of our Church is express on this subject. “ And so was Circumcision a Sacrament : which preached unto the outward senses the inward cutting away of the foreskin of the heart ; and sealed, and made sure, in the hearts of the circumcised, the promise of God touching the promised seed that they looked for.”—Hom. XXI.<sup>1</sup>

Here, according to the description of a Sacra-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 31 of the following work.

ment given by our Church immediately preceding the above words, this Sacrament “set out to the eyes and other outward senses of faithful Abraham and his faithful posterity,” the inward working of God’s free mercy and sealed in their hearts the promises of God.” And this initiatory “Sacrament” of “Circumcision” preached to their outward senses the inward cutting away of the foreskin of the heart, and sealed and made sure, in the hearts” of faithful Abraham and his faithful posterity thus “circumcised, the promise of God touching the promised seed that they looked for;” thus appealing to and confirming their faith in the Saviour who was the subject of the promise. Thus evidently the outward rite of Circumcision conveyed spiritual blessings to the faith of Abraham and his posterity.

And by these words the second question is answered, whether these promises were not sealed to them as to *faithful* Abraham and his *faithful* posterity, their faith applying to them the covenanted promise. “Circumcision,” says the Homily, “sealed and made sure in the hearts of the circumcised, the promise of God touching the promised seed that they looked for.” How did they look for the promised seed, not with their natural eye, for that could not look into a distance of nineteen hundred years, but with their spiritual eye, the eye of their faith, as “they looked for a city which hath foundations.” “Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and

was glad," it was the eye of faith, by which he saw the promised seed; and "that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness—"not in circumcision but in uncircumcision, and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Thus, it is evident, not only that Circumcision conveyed and confirmed spiritual blessings, but that those were spiritual blessings as they were received by *faithful* Abraham and his *faithful* posterity. "The promise" to Abraham was not merely that he should have the earthly Canaan for his inheritance, but "that he should be the heir of the world," and this "through the righteousness of faith;" and if Circumcision sealed nothing more to Abraham and his children than Canaan as an inheritance; God was only to him a God in providence, and not the God of Faithful Abraham as the distinguished Head of his chosen people, his Church. If it sealed temporal promises only, it was no Sacrament; which our Church asserts it to be; and thus without spiritual objects—Christ the promised Saviour and our everlasting inheritance in him, "faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." Rom. iv.

And here it is most important to distinguish between Circumcision as the seal of the promise, and the promised blessings and privileges which as a seal it ratified and conveyed. A Sacrament is the seal of an "instrument" or indenture, as our Church instances in the Sacrament of Baptism by



which “the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed.” Art. XXVII. “The promises” are the contents of the instrument, free privileges and blessings conveyed by the indenture, to which in Baptism the baptised sets his seal of affirmation and acceptance. But it is evident that a man may ignorantly set his seal to an indenture; he may neither be apprised of its contents, nor value them; and thus ignorantly and presumptuously set his seal to them. The contents of the instrument then, the rich “promises of forgiveness and adoption,” a man may neither know nor value, and yet set his seal to the indenture, while all around are doing the same. It is therefore a gross but a common error, I conceive, to confound the promises with the seal which confirms and accepts them. For surely thousands seem to receive the seal who were never instructed in the contents of the indenture—the free promises of mercy; and never showed any interest about them. This confusion of the Sacrament as the seal, with the promises which the seal confirms, I conceive to be the grand error of the self-called Orthodox School, and of its legitimate matured and consistent accomplishment, the school of Puseyism. It confounds the bare seal with the promises which it confirms: and thus reduces the Sacrament to a mere *opus operatum*, the mere ceremony of sealing: while the person sealing, may have no faith in the promises; he may neither know nor care

for forgiveness or adoption ; he may not feel sufficient interest in his Baptism to inquire once whether it conveyed any privilege at all ; and he may grow up in after life, or as an adult he may depart from the font a reckless recipient of a mere sign, a careless inquirer as to any advantage confirmed or conveyed by his seal, utterly ignorant of Christianity as a gift of mercy, and a boon of promise ; and utterly indifferent as to any spiritual benefit assured to him by Baptism as the seal of promise. And hence the necessary consequence takes place, ignorant unconcern about consistency of character, privileges without interest to improve them, vows without concern to fulfil them, duties without care to perform them, eternal interests rashly confided to a ceremony, a seal appended to an indenture the contents of which we neither know nor value, the accepted sign of a promise which that sign is a pledge to confer, the means to convey, and the token to assure, but of which the thing signified is disregarded, as a birthright neglected and despised ; in a word the seal of a promise, the privileges of which are unappreciated and unacknowledged ; and therefore, and on this very account calling for no faith in the divine word, and exercising no confidence in the covenant of a faithful God.

And hence the necessary consequence, a National Church sunk in nominal Christianity, a sign accepted for a thing, a seal confounded with a promise, baptised faces with unbaptised hearts,



Christianity in profession rather than in substance ; Christians signed and sealed for heaven without the life of faith acting out the promise of life in the experience of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost—the solid evidences of real Baptism as stated by our Church : and is not this the awful weight that is sinking our Professing Church, under the present inflictions of the wrath of an offended God ? “ the provoking of his sons and of his daughters ” by profession ; that after all his promises, and all their privileges as a Reformed Church, they are after all “ a very froward generation, CHILDREN IN WHOM IS NO FAITH ? ” Deut. xxxii. 20.

With the advantage of these necessary preliminary remarks, let us now return to our main question, and proceed with our historical proofs, that the Sacraments are the seals of the promise ; and that they were graciously granted to the heirs of salvation by a covenant God, ratifying “ at sundry times and in divers manners,” his promised mercy to his Church, and the faith of his Church in that promised mercy.

The renewed promise of mercy having been confirmed to “ Faithful Abraham, and to his children, and his household after him,” Gen. xviii. 19, by “ the sign of Circumcision,” the first initiatory Sacrament of grace under the Law, a type of that better and richer initiatory Sacrament of Baptism under the Gospel, about four hundred years after God renewed the kind testimony of his grace to his

Church, when under its most afflictive depression, and when on the point of a distinguished temporal deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the type of their spiritual deliverance from the yoke of sin. It was then that he renewed their confidence, and confirmed their faith in his merciful promise by the institution of the Passover. On the fourteenth day of the Month Abib the Paschal Lamb was to be sacrificed, "according to the house of their fathers a lamb for a house, and if the household be too little for the lamb," then in conjunction with his "neighbour next unto his house." "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass over the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast:—and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial: and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." *Exod. xii.* While the land of Egypt was the scene of divine vengeance, the blood of the slain lamb was a "token upon the houses" where favoured Israel was, an effectual preservation for him who believed the word of God, and thus kept himself from "the sword of the des-

troyer." And what memorial of divine mercy could be more effectual to perpetuate a sense of gratitude through succeeding generations, or afford a livelier exhibition to the heart of the faithful Israelite of that promised deliverer, who as the Lamb of God was to take away the sins of the world? What richer Sacrament could be presented to "the Church in the wilderness" of that promised Saviour who was to come, except that of which it was a plain type and forerunner for fifteen hundred years, that blessed Sacrament of the Supper of the Lord, no longer the Saviour of promise but of complete fulfilment, who has long given effect to the promise by shedding his blood and enjoying the triumph of his sacrifice in glory; and who as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church is continually confirming her faith, by the never-failing "memorial" of the Sacrament of the Supper of his love. That the Passover was truly a Sacrament confirming the faith of the believing Israelite in the promised Saviour, seems evident from the cup of expressive memorial which typified the Saviour to come as it was used by our Lord and his disciples in the last Passover celebrated by them immediately previous to the institution of the Sacrament of the Supper. The simple juxta-position of the two Sacraments as the text lies in the Gospel of St. Luke, will afford a remarkable evidence of their similitude. "And when the hour was come he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them,

with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God; and he took the cup [the cup of the Passover] and gave thanks, and said, take this, and divide it among yourselves, for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." And this last cup of the Sacrament of the Passover, is immediately succeeded by the institution of the first cup of the Lord's Supper. "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Luke xxii. 14—20. Here the conclusion of the Paschal Sacrament under the Law, finds its full accomplishment in the richer Supper of love under the Gospel: the same table contains the guests, the slain lamb of the Passover yields to the broken bread of the Supper, the very same cup of Paschal "Memorial" under the law, is that of "remembrance" under the Gospel: and the very same Saviour himself, whom both Sacraments designated, with his own blessed presence confirms the faith of his Disciples, accomplishing the Paschal type of the Law, in the anticipative antitype of the Gospel. Surely then the Passover was a Sacrament conveying grace and sealing it in confirming the faith of the believing participant, the very

same cup probably conveying the very same wine of “ memorial ” and “ remembrance ” of “ the sacrifice of the death of Christ.”

And it is remarkable how similar to this is the view which our Church takes of the Passover as illustrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. “ And as of old time God decreed his wondrous benefits of the deliverance of his people, to be kept in memory by the eating of the Passover, with his rites and ceremonies; so our loving Saviour hath ordained and established the remembrance of his great mercy expressed in his passion, in the institution of his heavenly supper.” Hom. XXVII. P. 1. “ For newness of life, as fruits of faith are required in the partakers of this table: we may learn by the eating of the typical lamb: whereunto no man was admitted, but he that was a Jew, that was circumcised, that was before sanctified.” Hom. XXVII. P. 2. Where the Church plainly intimates, that “ newness of life,” real sanctification, “ as fruits of faith ” is required “ in the partakers ” of “ the Lord's table,” as it was in “ the eating of the typical lamb,” or the Passover; to which none but the faithful “ was admitted,” that is, “ he that was a Jew, that was circumcised,” and as truly circumcised, “ that was before sanctified.” So that our Church as truly ascribes “ fruits of faith ” to the eater “ of the typical lamb,” or the Passover as it does to the partaker of the Lord's “ table; ” and thus makes the Passover as real a seal and sign of faith and spiri-

tual life, as it does the Lord's Supper and making Circumcision and sanctification synonymous to the faithful Jew, it makes both the Passover and Circumcision means of grace; and expressly saying "Circumcision was a Sacrament," and ascribing the same faith and newness of life and sanctification to the one institution as to the other, it makes them to be both Sacraments of the Law.

But our Church does not only thus by implication consider the Passover to be a Sacrament; as it does Circumcision, it calls it such in express terms in the following passage. "And if this advertisement of man cannot persuade us to resort to the Lord's table with understanding, see the counsel of God in the like matter; who charged his people to teach their posterity not only the rites and ceremonies of the passover, but the cause and end thereof; whence we may learn that both more perfect knowledge is required at this time at our hands, and that the ignorant cannot with fruit and profit, exercise himself in the Lord's Sacraments." Hom. XXVII. P. 1. Here no other institution is adverted to but the "Lord's table" under the Gospel, and "the rites and ceremonies of the passover" under the Law, and each is adduced as an equal instance that "the ignorant cannot with fruit and profit exercise himself in the Lord's Sacraments." And thus in the estimation of our Church the Passover is as real a Sacrament as that of "the Lord's table."

Thus it is evident that the two Sacraments of



the Law were seals of the promise,—signs, and pledges, and means of grace as Sacraments are, the Apostle expressly stating, that real “circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter,” Rom. ii. 29. and our Church as expressly confirming the same sentiment; “and so was Circumcision a Sacrament, which preached unto the outward senses the inward cutting away of the foreskin of the *heart*, and *sealed* and *made sure* in the *hearts of the circumcised*, the promise of God touching the promised seed that they looked for:” and the Scripture affirms the same of the Passover, as applied by the faith of the believing partaker. “Through faith he (Moses) kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.” Heb. xi. 28. The Passover was the seal of his faith in the promise. And such it was to every man that “kept” it with faith and a sanctified soul; for “newness of life, and fruits of faith were required” in all admitted to the “eating of the typical lamb,” says our Church, “whereunto no man was admitted, but he that was a Jew, that was circumcised, that was before sanctified.”

We now come in the process of our historical evidence, to the intermediate and preparatory dispensation of John the Baptist; and if we simply adhere to the word of Scripture, so far shall we find it, I conceive, from presenting an interruption to our statement, that on the contrary, the Baptism of John will be found to be as truly “from

heaven" and as real a Sacrament, the outward sign of water signifying and conveying real grace to the faithful partaker of it, as the two Sacraments of the Law which preceded, or the two Sacraments of the Gospel which succeeded it.<sup>1</sup>

Let us then distinctly bear in mind, what it was foretold that John should do in clearing the way for the coming of the Saviour by his intermediate dispensation between the shadows of the Law and the substantial realities of the Gospel. His office as the spiritual harbinger of his Saviour was distinctly foretold; He was to "prepare the way of the Lord," and to "make straight in the desert" of the Jewish Church "a highway for our God;" who was coming as the Saviour of Jew and Gentile, first to "his own," the household of faithful Abraham: and as his spiritual pioneer, "every

<sup>1</sup> "The Baptism of John, then, could not impart the Holy Ghost," says Dr. Pusey, "even on that ground, that it was administered while our Lord was yet in the flesh, before the atonement had been made, or the world cleansed for his indwelling." Tracts for the Times, No. 67. p. 246. If so, and really no grace of the Holy Ghost was imparted, before the atonement had been actually "made," then the ancient Church had no grace, and the enumeration of faithful Worthies in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews was a fallacy: then John the Baptist himself was not "sanctified from his mother's womb;" and what becomes of our Lord's declaration respecting his disciples before his atonement, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they *have received them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and *they have believed* that thou didst send me." John xvii. 8.



valley should be exalted, every mountain and hill be made low," Isaiah xl. 3, 4. and thus he should "make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke i. 17. And he was to come in the character of "Elijah the prophet," the stern prophet of the Law, "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," Mal. iv. 5. in judgment to terminate the legal dispensation in Church and State by the destruction of Jerusalem. And his office should be of a spiritual nature; to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers," or to repair nature by grace. This promise terminates the legal revelation; and the last word of it leaves the mind of the pious Jew fully impressed with the blessed hope that Elijah should shortly come, as the fore-runner of the promised Saviour; and with this final promise of the Law, the faith of the believing Jew was animated for the four hundred years of suspended revelation which elapsed between Malachi and the Baptist; for "the Law and the Prophets were until John." (Luke xvi. 16.)

When the fulness of the time was come the har-binger was sent forth; and these prophetic announcements distinguished his arrival. Not only Zacharias should "have joy and gladness," but "*many* shall rejoice at his birth: for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb, and *many of the children of Israel shall he*

*turn to the Lord their God.* And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke i. 14—17.

Here are three things to be remarked as to the spiritual character of this intermediate dispensation. First, it was preparatory to the full Gospel day as exhibited by the Saviour, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Secondly, its object; it was of a decidedly spiritual nature: "many should rejoice at his birth;" not at his rank or wealth or any temporal blessing, but for the spiritual blessings he should bestow, as follows, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb;" and his Ministry shall be *spiritually* successful; for "many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God," and his office is of a decidedly spiritual character as foretold, and here repeated; "To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." Thirdly, his character as a Minister, it is that of an intermediate dispensation; he is the first of the prophets of the Law, as closing the prophetic ministry of the Law, and therefore "among those born of women there hath not risen a greater prophet than John the Baptist;" his character therefore shall be that of stern legality; he shall be a Nazarite, and "shall drink neither wine nor strong drink;" but

“he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother’s womb ;” which was not the distinction of the prophets of the Law ; “and he shall go before” the Saviour, not in the sweet spirit of an Apostle of the full Gospel, crying, “Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord,” 2 Tim. i. 2. “but in the spirit and power of Elias,” “clothed with camel’s hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins ; eating locusts and wild honey,” Mark i. 6. “preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye ; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt. iii. 1, 2. The condition, the person, and the ministry of the Baptist were all peculiar to the intermediate and preparatory dispensation he came to administer ; the most accomplished of the Law, but short of the sweet peace and mercy of the Gospel ; it was that of repentance, and yet not without faith, but in a Saviour not yet fully come. But here let it be remarked, all is of a strictly spiritual character, and decidedly marks a spiritual dispensation.

So again at his Circumcision, the seal of the promise to him, his own spiritual character and that of his dispensation are distinctly repeated by his father, “filled with the Holy Ghost.” “And thou child shall be called the prophet of the Highest : for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways ; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, where-

by the day-spring from on high hath visited us," &c. Luke i. 76—78. Here it is foretold of him that he is to preach the Gospel, though faintly and dimly, according to the character of his dispensation. He is "to give knowledge of salvation," or to preach the Gospel unto his people, first by repentance "or remission of sins" to the penitent; and secondly "through the tender mercy of our God" as a Saviour, who as a day-spring from on high hath visited us—the very character of Christ's incipient Gospel in the flesh, during John's administration, which ceased before our Lord's had attained its completion, and during which faith beheld Christ but dimly revealed as the "day-spring" or faint dawn of the morning. Still John's ministry insisted on "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts xx. 21. to whom he referred his baptised converts as "he that cometh after me,—he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," Matt. iii. 11. Here clearly all the great features of a spiritual ministration are plainly foretold of him.

Again, that John's was a spiritual dispensation, is evident from St. Mark's description of it, who begins his Gospel with these remarkable words, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." Here John's dispensation is declared to be an integral part of

the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, even “the beginning” of it. The procession of the approach of royalty is headed by the harbingers and heralds who precede to prepare and make ready the way: they are the beginning and head of the procession. And our Lord Christ thus expressly connects the ministry of John with his Gospel; “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,” Matt. xi. 12. “The kingdom of heaven” or the Gospel dispensation, or as Bishop Hall interprets it, “the Evangelical Church”—in it “there hath been such confluence of holy clients as if they would forcibly thrust themselves into it,” and that “ever since the days of John’s first preaching until now.” Such were the spiritual effects of John’s ministry, our Lord himself being witness.

Much more might be adduced in proof of this, which will appear incidentally hereafter; I will close this question with John’s own testimony to the same. The whole sermon as given by St. Luke iii. 3—18. is the evident ministration of a spiritual office: that office was, “preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Repentance was the character of the ministry of the last prophet of the Law, but it was not without faith as that of the first preacher of the Gospel; therefore while men were looking for the Gospel, “and mused in their hearts of John whether he were the Christ or not,” he refers them to Christ yet to

come, (i. e. as to the power of his Gospel which was not fully wrought out even till he was raised to his throne of grace, and had sent down the Spirit from on high) as the object of their faith ; for without faith their repentance as their own act was impossible. “ John answered saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water ; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose ; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Here are the two great characters of a spiritual ministry, repentance and faith, though John’s dispensation, as preparatory, was characterised by repentance as breaking up the fallow ground of the impenitent heart, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord ; whose Spirit should hereafter sow the plentiful seeds of grace which should spring up hereafter to his glory.

As this intermediate and preparatory dispensation of John the Bapsist was evidently spiritual ; the question arises whether it had no Sacrament as a seal of the promises it conveyed to those faithful Jews who were the subjects of it ; and here we answer, that it had ; as is manifest from the Scriptures ; and that it sealed spiritual blessings to those who partook of it.

His designation was “ John the Baptist,” and the account of his baptism given by St. Mark is as follows. “ John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him



all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. “And” John “preached, saying there cometh one mightier than I after me. I indeed have baptized you with water : but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” Mark i. 4, 8. His name was the Baptist, and Baptism was the prominent character of his dispensation, and he “preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins ;” and accordingly the people “were all baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” Here John preached, and the people testified by the confession of sins, the peculiar and prominent character of John’s dispensation—the baptism of repentance: here they had evidently one spiritual requisite for the due reception of a Sacrament; they testified their repentance by “confessing their sins,” and this was the characteristic *preparation* of this dispensation ; but it was by no means the solitary and exclusive one, for John referred them to Christ as the object of their faith for the most perfect and full supply of spiritual blessings, which under the complete Gospel, when he had fully wrought out their salvation by his death, resurrection, and exaltation, he should amply shower down on them hereafter. And this statement seems to be fully confirmed by St. Paul ; “Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ.”

Acts xix. 4. "The baptism of repentance" was the characteristic feature of his dispensation, as Christ the object of faith was not yet fully revealed as a Saviour, but the people were referred to Him, "that they should believe on him which should come after him;" and "the baptism of repentance" was the Sacrament of that dispensation, the sign and seal of that repentance and faith which they "had being yet" unbaptised. It was the only Sacrament which that preparatory dispensation admitted; it effectually sealed their repentance, and it as effectually sealed their faith in that Saviour who was to come; though that object was but dimly seen, while he was yet engaged in his great work of mercy on earth; after which when it was perfectly accomplished, the faithful should be "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," even "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19.

And this answers exactly to the description of a Sacrament as given by our Church, which states "the exact signification of a Sacrament, namely, visible signs, expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins, and of our holiness and joining in Christ." Homily XXI. Here is first the "visible sign" of water baptism: secondly "the express command" of this Sacrament by God. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John," and he himself declares Baptism



to be his express commission. "John answered them, saying, I baptize with water." John i. 6, 26. Thirdly, to this Sacrament is "annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins." John "came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Luke iii. 3. And lastly a "promise of our holiness and joining in Christ." He referred them to Christ, to whom they were to be "joined" by faith, "one mightier than I cometh," and that for the express purpose of "holiness," or their being made holy; "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Luke iii. 16.

Here indeed is not the name of a Sacrament, for it was not then known: but here are all the particulars which the Church of Christ has for ages agreed to constitute a Sacrament: and it well answers to our Church's consistent definition in her Catechism, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." The water was the pledge, and means, and sign which signified remission of sins to the penitent and faithful Jew, who was the partaker of it: on the part of God, there was an ordained outward sign of an invisible grace: and on the part of man, there was penitence and faith to be sealed with the outer sign; and this is a perfect Sacrament.

But the Baptism of John had not only the out-

ward and visible sign of a Sacrament; it had the inward and spiritual grace also, "which doth work invisibly, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm the faith" Article XXIV. of him who received it. First, in the instance of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. When Jesus came to "John to be baptized of him," "John forbad him;" "and Jesus answering, said unto him, suffer it to be so *now*." The *present* dispensation requires my partaking of this Sacrament of Baptism, as the legal dispensation required my partaking of its Sacraments of Circumcision and the Passover; "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," and to give due observance to this preparatory dispensation, as well as to that of the Law. "Then he suffered him," and thus both sealed his faith and communicated grace to strengthen and to designate him for his future ministry; and especially to prepare him for the conflict with Satan, on which he immediately entered, for St. Matthew adds, after stating the approbation of his Father expressed from heaven, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil:" and St. Mark yet more strongly; "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." Mark i. 12. The Spirit descended on him at his Baptism, both sealing his faith, and strengthening him for the work of his ministry, by the needful communication of grace.

And why are we not to conclude, that when

“all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem went out unto” John, and “were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins,” that grace was not communicated in this Sacrament to every penitent and faithful soul, as it was to our Lord, both “quickening and strengthening his faith?” John received them as the Church has ever received its candidates for Baptism on the profession of their repentance, “confessing their sins,” and directing them to Christ as their Saviour, *them* “that they should believe on him that should come after him,” then engaged in working out our salvation, while the Church now demands faith in *us* in that Saviour who is come: in every penitent and faithful soul, we may conclude that it sealed and strengthened real grace, according to the truth of his profession, as Sacraments ever have done, and yet do. John gave the seal, as we now do, in a judgment of faith and charity, to the professing receiver, leaving secret things, the influence of grace to him who alone knows the heart, and who has said, “as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” Matt. viii. 13. To suppose that his Baptism was nothing more than an empty sign, is to reduce it to a mockery, and at once to disparage the ministry of John and the divine appointments. If John’s Baptism was ordained by God, it was ordained for a spiritual purpose, even that men should “confess their sins,” and “repent,” and “believe:” the outward Baptism with water, was not accomplished in washing the body, but was a

sign, a pledge, and a means to the penitent and faithful soul of the spiritual washing of that soul from sin. If it had not a spiritual meaning and power, it was but a mere form, a sign, and a ceremony, but a faithful God never deludes a faithful soul, for “faithful is he that promised.”

Nor does the much contested passage in Acts xix, as it appears to me, operate against, but in favour of our conclusion, that like other Sacraments, John's Sacrament of Baptism was a seal of the faith of him who received it. “Paul came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the Baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.” First, it is difficult to receive the words literally, that they had “not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” For as baptized by John, they had at least heard of his existence, if not of his person; and if they had not with their own eyes seen his form descending

on our Lord ; for it was a special part of John's preaching to his converts, Christ as their Saviour who should " baptize " them " with the Holy Ghost and with fire ;" of the existence and person of the Holy Ghost, it may be presumed that they had heard, but they might not have heard of his baptism " with fire," or the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they having been baptized by John in Judæa, and returning home to Ephesus soon after that event. Therefore Paul baptized them, " in the name of the Lord Jesus," " laid his hands on them, and the Holy Ghost came on them," in his miraculous gifts, " and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Secondly, assuming that the above as the ordinary interpretation is correct, and that these disciples were " baptized again by Paul in the name of the Lord Jesus," (which seems opposed to his own declaration. 1 Cor. i. 14.) yet it by no means decides the question, whether it was necessary that all baptised into John's baptism, should be baptized again " in the name of the Lord Jesus," in the perfect dispensation of the Gospel : and we no where hear that Peter, or his brother Apostles, were baptised again, or that they had any more than John's Baptism ; the two Baptisms being essentially the same, though distinguished by the characteristics of a preparatory and perfect dispensation. And this seems to be confirmed by our Lord's conversation with " the apostles whom he had chosen," immediately before " he was

taken up." Acts i. 2, 9. They had probably received John's Baptism; and he does not require them to be baptised again, previous to their reception of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, but to "wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, (as the initiatory rite of Christ's spiritual kingdom,) but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, (in his miraculous effusion at Pentecost, to which John directed their attention under the name of fire,) "not many days hence." He did not require them to be baptised again, as the Apostle baptised the twelve brethren at Ephesus, "in the name of the Lord Jesus" before, as in their case, "the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied:" thus confirming the sufficiency of the Baptism of John.

But whatever difficulty may attend the decyphering of this Scripture; (and doubtless the difficulty is great,) one thing is evident, which tends to prove our point, both as to the efficacy of John's Baptism as a Sacrament imparting grace to the faithful receiver, and the doctrine now under proof, that the Sacraments are seals of promise to the faithful. Paul admits these twelve brethren to be believers; for "he said to them, have ye received the Holy Ghost *since ye believed?*" here he expressly allows them to be believers, "since ye believed:" it was in this character as faithful men that Paul admitted them to Christian



Baptism, and communicated to them miraculous gifts after it : he gave them Baptism as the seal of their faith ; but they were confessedly faithful before it, and that faith they had as baptised by John, before they received Christian Baptism by Paul. Now when had they this faith as baptised by John ? either *before* they were baptised by him, as his converts are described as having “ confessed their sins,” and “ believing on him which should come after him ;” or at their Baptism by him. Let those who equally deny that John’s Baptism conveyed grace, and that the Sacraments are not seals of faith to the believing receiver, choose which horn of the dilemma they please : on one or the other they must be content to remain ; for these men were John’s converts, and they were confessedly faithful as such : had they then their faith *before* their baptism by him ? if so, it was imparted as “ a seal of that faith which they had yet being ” not baptised ; or they had it *at* their Baptism ; and if so, John’s Baptism had a spiritual efficacy, and conveyed grace to the faithful recipient. The just conclusion seems to be, that both these categories are true : that like all other Sacraments, John’s Baptism conveyed and confirmed grace to the faithful receiver ; and that it was a seal both of God’s faithfulness to his promise, and of the faithful receiver’s acceptance and confidence in the same.

But the case of Apollos at once decides the point that “ the Baptism of John,” in opposition to Dr. Pusey’s declaration, both “ could ”



and did “impart the Holy Ghost,” or spiritual blessings to those who received it. For, “a certain Jew, named Apollos, knowing *only* the Baptism of John,” was “mighty in the Scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord,” and “spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord;” and this he could assuredly neither *be* nor *do*, if “the Holy Ghost” had not been “imparted” to him: and therefore all that Aquila and Priscilla did was to “take him unto them, and expound unto him the way of God *more perfectly*.” John’s Baptism had “instructed him in the way of the Lord,” so that “he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord” after the best of his knowledge and power; but his knowledge and his preaching were both imperfect, for they could not exceed the level of John’s dispensation, which was preparatory and *imperfect*: but Christ’s was a more perfect dispensation, which they “expounded to him more perfectly.” It was a case of degree and comparison, not of fact; for that was the same under either dispensation; the Holy Ghost was given, and spiritual blessings were imparted. Acts xviii. 24.

From the foregoing instances then, of the efficacy of John’s Baptism as a Sacrament imparting grace both to the faith of our Lord in “fulfilling all righteousness,” and to that of the faithful converts of John’s peculiar and preparatory dispensation, who came “confessing their sins,” and “believing in him that should come after him,” and from the instance of Apollos, we may safely con-

clude that John's Baptism as the seal of faith to the converts of his intermediate dispensation, was as truly a Sacrament, the visible sign conveying and confirming the invisible grace, as the Sacraments of Circumcision and the Passover which were seals of faith before, or the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were equally seals of grace after it.

Let us now proceed to consider the two Sacraments of the perfect Gospel; and we shall find them, I trust, consistent illustrations of the same great exhibition of mercy,—to encourage and confirm the Church, that the Sacraments are the seals of the promise, and that they were graciously granted to the heirs of salvation, by a covenant God, ratifying "at sundry times and in divers manners" his promised mercy to his Church, and the faith of his Church in that promised mercy.

And first as to the Sacrament of Baptism as established by our Lord Jesus Christ. The following are the words of its institution as given respectively by St. Matthew and St. Mark; "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not

shall be damned." Mark xvi. 15, 16. The commission of the Apostles was to go, and teach or to disciple to Christ all nations, to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature:" and when the Gospel had been effectually preached to them, and they had been effectually taught and disciplined; the Apostles were to "baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;" teaching them to observe that universal holiness which becomes a godly and a Christian life; "and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world:" and to encourage you in your work, be assured of the efficacy of my presence with you and those who succeed you in all your ministrations whether of preaching the word, or of administering the Sacraments, "even unto the end of the world." "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;" and as to those who are the subjects of your preaching, and of Baptism, he that so listens to your "preaching," and is so effectually "taught" as to accept the Gospel which you preach, and sincerely to profess his belief in it, and as a believer to be baptized—"he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved:" but on the contrary, "he that believeth not;" he that without a genuine faith, presumptuously sets his seal to the truth of the Gospel, and recklessly professes that at his Baptism which he does not believe, or after being taught, obsti-

nately and perversely rejects his Baptism, "shall be damned." This is the great principle of Baptism as laid down at its fundamental institution as a Christian Sacrament: the world was to be effectually taught and disciplined to Christ by the preaching of the Apostles and their successors; and when men were so effectually evangelised as to believe the Gospel, and in consequence to profess their faith, and to be baptised in evidence and confirmation of it, they should be saved; while he that heard the word and rejected it, and refused both evidence and confirmation of the same, "should be damned." Here the plain meaning of the term seems to be, that the Believer is alone qualified to be baptised in confirmation of his belief, and be saved; while the unbeliever being disqualified, shall not receive the seal of that faith which he has not; and damnation is his portion.

And as this is the grand principle of Christian Baptism as laid down by our Lord at its institution, that the professing believer is alone qualified to receive it, so the practice of the Church has ever been in just unison with this principle: for "not many days" after this institution of Baptism this principle was confirmed in its fullest effect. Ten days afterwards, Peter "lifted up his voice" and preached his first Gospel sermon to the astonished multitudes assembled on the day of Pentecost, the conclusion of which was, "therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have

crucified, both Lord and Christ.” And the effect of this preaching was immediate : “ Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren what shall we do ? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Acts ii. 14, 36—39. Here was first the preached word ; secondly its effect on the hearers testified in their repentance and faith in the promise ; “ they gladly receiving his word : ” and on this profession they “ were baptized.” According to our Lord’s express words, first the means “ teach ”—preach the Gospel ; then the effect, “ believe,” “ baptize,” “ salvation.” About three thousand souls were thus renewed in holiness and regenerated to life, having gladly received Peter’s word by a living faith, and “ were baptized ” as the seal and pledge of the same. “ And thus the word of God increased ; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly ; and a great company of the priests were obedient unto the faith.” Acts vi. 7 ; and doubtless were baptised in confirmation of their regenerated state ; but their Baptism is not mentioned as the distinctive token of their renewed condition, but their “ obedience to the faith,” for this was the grand privilege of promise,

“a mind in which God’s laws were put, and a heart in which they were written,” (Heb. viii. 10.) and not the Baptism which was the sign and seal and pledge and means of it.

Let us advance a little further in the history of the infant Church, and trace the illustration of our principle as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles in preaching and baptising their new converts. “Then Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.” “And when they *believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Here was a simple repetition of the usual process laid down by our Lord’s institution : first “Philip preached Christ unto them ;” then “they believed Philip preaching,” &c. And in confirmation of their faith, and of the blessings it conveyed, they received the seal, “they were baptized.”

And the case of Simon recorded in this portion of Scripture affords an instance of the mode in which the candidates were admitted to Baptism ; it was on their professing their faith in Christ Jesus. “Then Simon himself believed also : and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip,” &c. Philip could not look into his heart ; he must therefore in a judgment of charity have given him credit for that faith which he professed to have, as John must have done to the assembled multitudes at his Baptism ; he must have baptised them on their “confessing their sins, and professing



their faith in that Saviour to whom he referred them, and "who was to come after him:" he assumed their profession to be sincere. As Peter must also have done towards the three thousand he baptised on the day of Pentecost; he had neither time nor ability to enter into the special examination of each candidate any more than John had; he did therefore as we now do, assumed the sincerity of their profession, and gave them the seal of the promise, concluding in a judgment of charity, that they had that faith to apply the promise which they professed to have; and there might in all these companies have been more than one Simon, more than one hypocrite or insincere professor, to whom credit was unduly given for the profession of that faith which he had not; and who set his seal to an instrument, of the blessings of which he was either ignorant, or presumptuously pretended to when in insincerity and unbelief. These evils, as in the present corrupt state of our nature, can only be partially corrected at best by the discipline of the Church, while the tares are yet growing up with the wheat; and can only be effectually remedied when every Simon shall be assigned "to his own place" at the day of final distribution. Heaven alone is the place where nothing that defiles or offends can enter; they only can inherit it, who have "obtained a good report" by a genuine faith. Its pure atmosphere is breathed by "the Spirits of just men made perfect" only. Heb. xii. 23.

The same chapter contains the interesting con-



firmation of our principle in the instance of the Eunuch, when Philip “preached unto him Jesus,” and the Eunuch professed, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” and Philip gave him the seal of that faith he professed to have, “and he baptized him.”

In all these instances, and in every other, as we may see hereafter, it was on the charitable assumption, that the faith professed in the promise was sincere that the Apostles affixed the seal of Baptism to the applicant; nor am I aware, that one instance can be adduced from Scripture to the contrary, or rebut the assertion made by Scripture and our Scriptural Church, that Sacraments are the seals of that faith which men are assumed to have, before the Church proceeds to affix her public seal to their right of admission to her blessings.

But here we must pause to inquire, or rather to answer the inquiry, how can these blessings be made applicable to infants, that they should receive Baptism as the sign and seal of these spiritual blessings also? The answer is, that the faith of the Church applies them to infants in virtue of the promise made to Abraham and his posterity under the Law, and renewed to all the family of faithful Abraham, both Jew and Gentile, under the Gospel. Not only “the baptism” of her adult members, but that of “young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ under either covenant;” the whole Church, young and

old, being equally the children of promise and free grace, and “the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed,” Art. XXVII. to the one as well as the other.

God “promised to our forefathers,” in the Church, “Abraham and his seed for ever.” “I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,” and he confirmed the same under the legal dispensation by the Sacrament of Circumcision. “He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations.” Gen. xvii. On the faith of this promise, thus specifically made not to Abraham only but to his seed, the Church under the Law, through all her generations consistently gave to every male child Circumcision as the seal of this promise; giving credit to the divine mercy and truth that it would be faithful to its word, as St. Stephen describes it from the fountain throughout the several generations of the Church, “and he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs,” who in like manner circumcised their children in faith of the promise. And in faith of this promise made to Abraham and his seed the faithful Jew brought his child for the seal of Circumcision from generation to generation, in right of the promise, practically applying the encourag-

ing declaration to himself and family—"For the Lord is gracious; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth (his fidelity to his promise) endureth from generation to generation." Psalm c. 4.

And in the first sermon preached by St. Peter, when the Evangelical kingdom was "fully come," Acts ii. 1. this promise was renewed to the Church and to her children. Then Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children" in common with you, "and to all that are afar off," whether in place, in time, or in character, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The promise is as truly the right of the *child* of the Church as it is that of the Church itself, for the covenant is as truly made with Abraham's seed as it is with Abraham himself: and here it is as truly renewed with the child of the Church, as it is with the Believer who is here under Peter's sermon "pricked to the heart," who "repents and is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." In both instances the promise of eternal life is equally free, and all the blessings of the covenant of grace are as truly made over by promise to the children of the Believer as to the Believer himself: and if the blessings of the covenant belong with equal freeness to the child as to the Parent, and are equally the child's by promise, the child has as true a claim to the seal of the promise, Baptism, as the Parent; and it is for the

Parent's faith to apprehend and to apply the promise to his child, and to introduce his child to the Church for the seal of covenant blessings, grounding the right of the child to receive that seal, on its claim that it is a real member of the Church by promise. Or as one of the Reformers expresses it, "There is a special regard to be had to the infants of the faithful. For although they *have not faith in effect*, such as those have that be of age, yet so it is that they have the seed and the spring in virtue of the promise, which was received and apprehended by the Elders. For God promised not us only to be our God, if we believe in him, but also that he will be the God of our offspring and seed, yea, unto a thousand degrees, that is, to the last end." The claim of the children of the Church then to the seal of Baptism is founded on the same ground as that of the Elders or the Parents; the free promise of mercy in Christ, "for the promise is unto you, and to your children."<sup>1</sup>

We cannot more intelligibly illustrate this statement than by appealing to the "Public Baptism of Infants" as "used in" our "Church." The child is brought as a child of a faithful member of the Church to be introduced into the congregation constituting that part of the visible Church to which he belongs, and under which the providence of God has placed him. The Parent, as a Christian man, is the member of a particular Church or

<sup>1</sup> See p. 162 of the following Work.

congregation; and he applies on the ground of the promise to himself and his child, for the public seal of his Christian profession—Baptism with the recognised admission into all the blessings which it conveys. Hence the child is not brought to the congregation for the first reception of grace, for this he has already in the apprehension of the faithful Parent in virtue of the promise; but as our Church expresses it, “we give thee humble thanks for that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in thee,” all of us, whether congregation, or *us* who more immediately surround this font, including the child also; for the child has already as the child of a believer, (whose faith from his very birth has ascribed this blessedness to his child,) both “grace” and “faith” in their “seed and spring,” in virtue of the promise; the Church assuming them to be in the child as John the Baptist was gracious even from his birth. The Church therefore does not merely pray for the imparting of grace to the child, any more than it does to any other present, but “*increase* this knowledge, and *confirm* this faith in us evermore, “and” give thy Holy Spirit to this Infant that he may be born again,” and all the fruits of grace may appear in him in a new birth, and regenerated life. So again in the prayer of Consecration, the Church prays “grant that this child now to be baptized therein may receive,” not thy grace simply, but “the *fulness* of thy grace; and ever *remain* in the number of thy faithful and

elect children." The child is not prayed for to be *made* a faithful child, or an elect child, for of these blessed privileges he has "the seed and spring" already "in virtue of the promise;" but that he may *remain* in the "number of thy faithful and elect children:" not the *admission* of the child into these characters and privileges is prayed for, but his *perseverance* in the same; to receive the public accredited seal of which he is now presented for Baptism. He is accordingly baptised, and then follows his reception—"We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock," &c. not into the Church of Christ, but "into the congregation of Christ's flock" or Church; that particular Church and congregation to which God in his gracious providence has appointed him. As the child of a Believer, as soon as born, he was to the faith of his Parents, and the general Communion of Saints, a child of the Church. Baptism has fixt its seal upon him as such; and he is now recognised of the general Communion of Saints, being admitted as a Saint to that peculiar portion of the Church to which God in his mercy has assigned him. The Priest accordingly declares before the whole congregation, "that this child is by Baptism regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church," and at the instance of the Priest they thank God "that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with the Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church." And God



having thus ratified his promise by the seal, they pray that all the blessings of the covenant in grace and glory may be secured to the child.

Here then I must especially solicit the attention of the Reader to this consistent proof of the truth of our statement ; that whether baptised adult or baptised infant, each comes to receive the seal of Baptism as a Believer, and as the sign of that faith which he has, being yet unbaptised. “ The promise is to the Believer, and to his children ; ” in faith of this promise the Believer comes and receives the seal ; and in faith of the same promise existing in his heart, “ in the seed and spring,” to the apprehension of the faithful Parent, and Sponsor, and Church, the congregation prays, “ that this child now to be baptized, may receive the fullness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children ; ” or, for increase of grace, and perseverance and establishment in the same.

Neither will our Church allow us to doubt the reality of Baptismal blessedness, and that in a judgment of faith and charity God has actually bestowed on the child the blessings which have been asked. *Before* the Baptism the Sponsors are expressly encouraged, “ Ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his Gospel to grant all these things that ye have prayed for ; which promise he for his part will most surely keep and perform.” And *after* the Baptism of the child in private, when it is afterwards presented



for reception, the congregation is addressed, “doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe that he hath likewise favourably received this present Infant:” to doubt is to withhold our faith; and to withhold our faith is to vacate the covenant; for faith is the instrument of reception which embraces the promise, applies its privileges to ourselves, and unites us to Christ. To doubt then is effectually to destroy. The Church therefore allows no doubt on this subject; she believes and blesses God for the same, that the sealing Spirit has accompanied the sealing sign, and yields God thanks “that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit,” for she knows that “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved:” on the part of all the parties concerned upon earth, the Church, the Parents, the Sponsors, and the child, to believe, and to receive Baptism as the seal of this belief is to be saved; and as faith is the inseparable condition<sup>1</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> The Sacraments are conditional blessings, and require repentance and faith as previous *conditions* of which they are the seals. “Sacraments are heavenly ceremonies which God hath sanctified and ordained to be administered in his Church; *first*, as marks whereby to know when God doth impart the vital or saving grace of Christ unto all that are capable thereof; and *secondly*, as *means conditional*, which God requireth in them, unto whom he imparteth grace. That saving grace which Christ originally is or hath for the general good of his whole Church, by Sacraments, he severally deriveth into every member thereof. Sacraments serve as the instruments of God to that end and purpose, *moral*

conveys the benefit, so unbelief effectually vacates it, for on the contrary, "he that believeth not shall be damned."

And the warrant of this faith is plainly laid down by our Church in the conclusion of her great Article of grace, the Seventeenth. "Furthermore, we must *receive God's promises* in such wise as they be *generally* set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and in our *doings*, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the *word* of God." Faith is the Receiver of promise, and it must receive the promises as they are *generally* set forth in "Holy Scripture to the Church." Such as "the promise is unto you, and to your children." Acts ii. 39. It is for the Believer to say, "this promise is" generally set forth for the good of the Church. Am I a Believer? if so, the promise is made to me: Lord, give me faith to accept it. And if I am a Believer, the promise is equally set forth for the good of my child, as the child of a Believer." Here faith applies *particularly* the promise which is set forth *generally*, and thus Baptism is the seal of my faith in this kind promise of God with re-instruments, the use whereof is in our own hands, the effect in his; for the *use* we have his express commandment; for the *effect* his *conditional* promise; so that without our *obedience* to the one, there is of the other no apparent *assurance*: as contrariwise when the signs and Sacraments of his grace are not either through contempt unreceived, or received with contempt, *we are not to doubt* but that they really *give* what they *promise*, and *are* what they *signify*."—HOOKER.

spect to my child ; as the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the current confirmatory seal, as the Homily states it, of " the inward working of God's free mercy, and doth as it were, seal in our hearts the promises of God." Every repeated reception of the Lord's Supper is a repeated seal, and renewed confirmation of all the rich promises of the Gospel made to the Believer : and the presenting his individual child for the special benefit of the promise, is the particular application of that promise to the spiritual welfare of his child.<sup>1</sup>

And indeed the seventeenth Article *specially* understood and applied to every formulary of our Church, from the Baptismal to the Burial Service, is the master-key that commands every ward, and opens the whole lock with facility. Here salvation is wholly of grace from beginning to end. And the Services of the Church are an expanded interpretation of it. In the two first clauses of the Article are contained the *cause* of our salva-

<sup>1</sup> And thus the Church informs her Catechumen, that he is not able to do these things of himself, without " his (God's) special grace." The promises to the Church are general ; they are applied specially to the baptised by the faith by which he is " made a member of Christ," &c. : and they are evidenced as really his by God's special grace, " which he must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer." The *specialty* of grace is the evidence that the *general* promise is really his own : but the *warrant* for the specialty of grace is the *general* promise which is offered to all, and all are invited to ask, that they may receive and apply it to themselves.

tion, the free choice of God in Christ, the excellency of this “benefit” in the seven privileges which constitute the character and blessedness of the subject of this free choice, and the blessings and miseries which attend the *use* and *abuse* of the doctrine; and lastly, the mode of applying these blessings which are given in general promises to a ruined world, that faith may apply the promises particularly to each individual subject, which faith is as truly a boon and gift, as the original free choice of a merciful God. Let but salvation from first to last, in its gift and apprehension, be received as a boon and mere grace, of which the free promise is the rich expression, and it will be seen that God is as free to give his grace to the sinful child, as to the sinful Parent, and to convey and confirm it by his seal of Baptism to the sinful child as to the sinful Parent; and that in consequence of the freedom of the promise to the faithful child, as to the faithful Parent, our Reformers, with all the Reformed Churches, are justified in assuming the reality of Baptismal Regeneration in the child, and to teach him to say, and to believe that he was indeed made at his Baptism “a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;” and that—not to *deserve* God’s favour, (which is in fact a contradiction in terms) but *in return for* such free and abundant blessings on God’s part, he verily “thinks” on his own, that he “is bound to believe and to do” as his Sponsors “promised”

for him, that “ by God’s help so he will,” that he “ heartily thanks ” God “ that he has called him ” by Baptism “ to this state of salvation through Christ,” a state where either Party has indented on the reciprocity of mutual promises, and in which he “ prays God to give him his grace, that he may continue unto his life’s end.” This same blessed spirit of assurance of salvation accompanies the child in the formulary of his Confirmation, and it pervades with a luminous and beautiful consistency every successive Service, till, on “ committing his body to the ground,” the Church pronounces over him a “ sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life ;” the assumption of his Baptismal regeneration accompanying him through all his connexion with the Church of Christ, from his infancy to his maturity for glory.

Let the present Bishops, and Ministers, and People of our Church but elevate their faith to the Scripture-proof eminency of this Article of free grace, and simply accept salvation from the *love* of the Father, through the *grace* of the Son, and by the *communion* of the Holy Spirit, and the Baptismal regeneration of the Infant will be as evident to their faith as that of the Adult; and all the Services of our incomparable Church will receive their due meaning and intelligence : but so long as even Evangelical Christians float in the dun regions of semi-evangelism below, and attain not to the full sunshine of grace as brilliantly exhibited to faith, and hope, and love, and the richest

spiritual apprehension in the eminent grace of the Seventeenth Article—faith the only faculty of her spiritual apprehension being cold and languid, the mystery of Baptism as the initiatory institution of the kingdom of grace, being deprived of its due credit must be deprived of its due honour.

It is for want of this faith, that this Sacrament is deprived of its mystery, because it is merely apprehended by the natural eye, as an object of sight and sense: the eye of any man may behold the water as the outward sign; nature is quite equal to this, with its organs of common apprehension, the eye to see the water, and the hand to feel it: but the rich inward spiritual mystery of the new birth as the subject of the promise of grace, no natural eye can discern, for “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 14. Faith is the spiritual eye which can alone discern the mystery of regeneration, of which the water is the sign, and seal, and pledge, and means in the Sacrament of Baptism; and as I approach it with a lively faith, so do I apply all the privileges and blessings of regeneration, which is the birth of all spiritual blessedness, to myself and to my child.

But if there be no faith there is no blessing; for the promise is unaccepted, the boon is unapplied.

But let the faith of the Church be in lively exercise, and it *especially* “receives God’s promises as they be *generally* set forth in holy Scripture.” (Art. XVII.) And this Sacrament ordained of Christ



is to its apprehension a “certain sure witness, and *effectual* sign of grace, and God’s good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him;” (Art XXV.)—in the adult applicant for Baptism, as he professes his faith in the Saviour; and in the Infant, inasmuch as in virtue of the promise he has “the seed and spring of faith,” for which the Church gives him credit in a judgment of faith and love, and prays that “he may ever *remain* in the number of” God’s “faithful and elect children.”

Thus far then our principle seems to have received not only uninterrupted but accumulated confirmation; that the Sacraments are the seals of the promise; and that they are graciously granted to the heirs of salvation by a covenant God, ratifying “at sundry times and in divers manners,” (Heb. i. 1.) his promised mercy to his Church, and the faith of his Church in that promised mercy.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper affords so ample an illustration of our principle, that it might be sufficient merely to mention it, and to conclude our proof: but it may be as well to add the invitation of our Church to those “who truly and earnestly repent them of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbours,” &c. “to draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort,” &c. Our Lord, at the institution of this Sacrament had said, “Do this in remem-



brance of me : ” “ as often ” then “ as ” we “ eat this bread, and drink this cup ” we “ do shew the Lord’s death till he come. ” 1 Cor. xi. 26. Every additional reception if it is an additional seal of our faith, as it nourishes that faith which “ is the mouth of the soul, ” and refreshes and confirms our spiritual life : it is only to the faithful man that the simple signs convey spiritual life as means of grace under the operation of the Spirit, and this in the degree that it stirs up a lively remembrance of Christ ; and the broken bread, and the poured out wine present a lively image of his Saviour’s sufferings to his soul. He wants no fictitious presence of deity either in elements transubstantiated into the corporeal presence of Christ, or consubstantiated with the same : faith and faith only is the recipient, and faith is the spiritual eye that discerns not a material but a spiritual object. The correlative to faith is not matter but the divine word : take the word from the element and faith has no object to discern ; add the word, “ this is my body, ” to the element, and faith has its proper food to feed upon ; and the divine life is nourished in the soul, as faith discerns the Lord’s body in the simple and integral institution of the sign presenting the thing signified. Once forsake this simple view and let faith be superseded by sight and sense, and in the same degree we recede from faith into these regions of mere nature, in that very degree superstitious views of the gross corporeal presence are engendered and confirmed ; first

in the encouragement of an indefinite consubstantiality, till in the progressive assumption of corporeal presence we arrive at the absolute grossness of transubstantiation; which monstrously opposes the very evidence of our senses, and utterly repudiates faith for infatuation and delusion. It is this which exchanges the communion table of faithful remembrance into an altar of unintelligible deity; and as the error swells its dimensions into more palpable idolatry, corrupts the feast of grateful love, and elevates a morsel of kneaded wheat into the body of God. It is this also which ascribes to the water of Baptism the power of the Spirit; superstitiously invests the element with divine efficacy, and expects from the observance of a ceremony that blessing which faith draws from the promise of a covenant God.

Will not the worshippers of the onion and the ibis rise up in judgment against such worshippers of Christ?

But are not the Sacraments mysteries? They are great, and excellent, and glorious, and to use Hooker's words "dreadful mysteries:" and as solemn institutions of Christ are worthy of our most cherished reverence and most unfailing observation, for they are rich and powerful means expressly appointed by Christ to increase and confirm his mystical body the Church. Blessed be that God and Saviour who has ever kindly condescended to the infirmities of his weak and helpless Church; "he knows whereof we are made,

he remembers that we are but dust;" Psalm ciii. 14. and that our faith left unpropped by his grace, would fail and decay in a moment: he has kindly upheld it therefore under the first dispensation "by two immutable things, by which it was impossible that God could lie"—his word and confirmatory oath, ever renewing the faith of his infirm Church by the two Sacraments of the Law; and under the mild and blessed reign of his full Gospel, still "perceiving of how senseless and heavy metal we are made;" (Hooker), "he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort." Yes the Sacraments are mysteries, most worthy of our choicest, loudest Eucharist: "We most heartily thank thee, for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us," &c. They are mysteries—full and frequent assurances of the favour of God to every faithful recipient; and our blessed Church as her faith has received them as seals of the promise, must ascribe to them, as effectual means of grace, her continuance, increase, renewal, and confirmation, from the day of her Reformation to the present hour.

But then they are not mysteries to superstition, but to faith: they are not mysteries to reason, or

nature, or sight, or sense, or mere human apprehension : none of these can rise above the level of their powers of apprehension, and must necessarily issue in presumption, perversion, error, mistake, and superstition ; clothing the Sacrament as a divine institution with carnal misapprehension, and ill-applied veneration. A divine mystery is alone intelligible to faith, for as the vehicle of grace, faith alone can discern its meaning and apply its power. The ascription either of a consubstantial or a transubstantial presence of deity is the false mystery of natural misapprehension, and is the expression of superstitious regard : while a divine mystery—faith, and faith alone discerns, comprehends, applies, improves, and enjoys : for it discerns in “ the outward part or sign of the Lord’s Supper, the inward part or thing signified ”—even “ the body and blood of Christ ; ” for “ then ” the realising experience of a living faith “ spiritually eats the flesh of Christ and drinks his blood ”—“ which are verily and indeed taken and received by the *faithful* in the Lord’s Supper ; ” and by the *faithful* man alone ; and for this plain reason, because no other than the faithful man has the faculty either of discerning or applying a divine mystery. Superstition may create and impose mysteries and every “ lying wonder ; ” ignorance may mistake and misapply them ; and delusion may cherish and embrace them ; but they are all of the school of our perverted nature : it is a divine faith which can alone perceive a spiritual mystery,

and apply its grace to the nourishment of the soul. On the part of God we have the promise, with the Sacrament as the seal to assure of its grace; on the part of the receiver we have faith, the sole correlative faculty which enables us to receive it.

The strong and beautiful words of the Homily are full to our purpose: "Thus we see, Beloved, that resorting to this table, we must pluck up all the roots of infidelity, all distrust in God's promises, that we make ourselves living members of Christ's body. For the unbelieving and faithless cannot feed upon that precious body; whereas the faithful have their life, their abiding in him, their union, and as it were their incorporation with him—so that at this his *table* we receive not only the outward Sacrament, but the spiritual thing also; not the figure but the truth; not the shadow only, but the body; not to death, but to life; not to destruction but to salvation." Hom. XXVII. P. 1. Faith sits at the same *table* of communion with its Lord, and sees "the King sitting at his table" and perceives "the spikenard" of grace "sending forth its smell" around: superstition elevates the *table* into an *altar*, and fancy ascribes to it an image of fictitious and unintelligible deity.

I close this subject of the Sacraments in the words of the last accredited formulary of our Church—Nowell's Catechism.<sup>1</sup> "In both the Sacraments, the substances of the outward things

<sup>1</sup> See "Nowell's Catechism," No. XII. of Budd's "Helps for the Young."

are not changed, but the word of God, and heavenly grace coming to them, there is such efficacy, that as by Baptism we are once regenerate in Christ, and are first as it were, joined and grafted into his body; so, when we rightly receive the Lord's Supper, with the very divine nourishment of his body and blood, most full of health and immortality, given to us by the work of the Holy Ghost, and received by us by faith, *as the mouth of our soul*, we are continually fed and sustained to eternal life, growing together in them both into one body with Christ."

Such I apprehend, is the sound doctrine of Sacraments from the testimony both of Scripture and of our Church. They are seals of God's fidelity to his promise on one hand, and they are seals of our faith in the truth of his promise on the other. And they as really differ from the privileges they ratify to faith, as the seal placed to an indenture or "instrument," differs from the privileges or advantages that indenture conveys; and as these privileges may be possessed without the ratification of the seal, so the privileges of Baptism and the Lord's Supper may be possessed without these Sacraments as seals to confirm that possession; as is manifest in the instance of the thief on the cross who was transferred to Paradise without either Sacramental seal; and, as will probably be seen in the case of numbers, whom free grace has regenerated and converted at the eleventh or twelfth hour, and who have entered heaven un-



sealed with any Sacrament, but with the accrediting seal of the “free Spirit” alone, “establishing” them for immortality. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” his faith necessarily precedes his Baptism, as the terms of the indenture necessarily precede its seal; and, as the seal is the outward expression of the inward consent of the will of him that seals, so the Sacrament is the outward expression and testimony of that lively faith and spiritual consent which accepts the benefits of the promise. And thus Sacraments are not *absolutely* but only “*generally* necessary to salvation.”

But “in such as worthily receive them,” God forbid that we should suppose that they are mere signs or empty ceremonies; God preserve us from this lukewarmness, suspicion, or indifference of unbelief, for such it is. No, “in such as worthily receive them,” and “in such *ONLY*,” says our Church, “they have a wholesome effect or operation,” “they be certain *sure witnesses*, and *effectual* signs of grace.” As to Baptism, “they that receive baptism rightly,” that is both in its ministration and acceptance, “are grafted into the Church,” actually, vitally, and really: and as to the Lord’s Supper “to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.” Articles XXV, XXVII, XXVIII. Let faith be there to receive, and the



promise of a faithful God is concerned to give them a spiritual effect. "In a sum I say thus: as I imagine not any gross joining, so I affirm that same secret and marvellous communicating of Christ's body in his Supper to be most near and straight, most assured, most true, and altogether most high and perfect." Nowell's Catechism. "Where the signs and Sacraments of his grace are not either through contempt unreceived, or received with contempt, we are *not to doubt* but that they really give what they promise, and are what they signify. For we take not Baptism nor the Eucharist for bare resemblances or memorials of things absent; neither for naked signs and testimonies *assuring us of grace received before*; but (as they are indeed and in verity) for means *effectual*, whereby God, when we take the Sacraments, delivereth into our hands that grace available unto eternal life, which grace the Sacraments represent and signify." Hooker. No, we are "not to doubt;" "doubt ye not therefore but earnestly believe," says our Church. Let us but come with "full assurance of faith" and the blessing is indisputably ours: "faith is the evidence of things not seen;" let us cultivate this evidence and embrace the blessing. Let it be remembered that to wait for sensible evidences before we acknowledge the blessing of Sacraments, is to live by sight and sense and not by faith: "Divine institutions," remarks Bishop Hall with his usual sound apprehension of truth, "are ill measured by sensible

operations. There are spiritual and indivisible fruits of holy ordinances, which, as being most proper for them, shall be perpetually produced by them, through the blessing of the Almighty, even when there is no appearance of any outward efficiency." Vol. IX. p. 794. " Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Rom. iv. 21, 22. The Sacraments are institutions of our Lord Christ, mercifully conferred on his Church to convey grace and to confirm it. Let us be but true to Christ, and give him full credit for his faithfulness to his promise, and his adherence to his word; and the Sacraments shall be what they profess to be, both fountains of divine life, and seals of divine veracity. Let the hand be but stretched forth to receive, and the boon cannot be wanting; for the Spirit is ever waiting to bestow it, according to the promise, " open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Ps. lxxxix. 10.

If the foregoing be the true and sound doctrine respecting Sacraments, that they are seals of the faith both of the faithful Adult and the assumed faithful Infant, then it is faith in the divine promise which qualifies for the reception of Sacraments: and as on the one hand it is faith which applies the promise and appropriates it under the divine blessing to individual profit, and so consequently to that of the Church, or the whole communion

of Saints ; so, on the other, it is want of faith both in the baptised, the Parents, the Sponsors, and the Church, which renders the Sacraments but empty ceremonies, bare signs, mere objects of sight and sense ; inasmuch as there is no faith either to acknowledge or to apply that promise, which Sacraments are expressly given, and most mercifully ordained to seal.

What then are Dr. Pusey's views of the Sacrament of Baptism ? I should say in a word most just and Scriptural on the one hand, and most fallacious and unscriptural on the other. His superstructure is beautiful and imposing, and thus he has deceived many : but his foundation is most delusive and destructive. He glitters but to confound, and he attracts but to destroy.

His estimate of Baptismal blessedness is just and impressive. " It is not then in vain, surely, that throughout his whole Church he has blended with that early past, one brighter spot which sheds its lustre over all, and from which the light of their sun shines seven-fold, Is. xxx. 26, our Baptismal morn ; an Oasis it may be in a wilderness, but a spot on which our memory may without misgiving, repose, because all its brightness comes directly from him, and in it, " the light of his countenance " shone, and still shines upon us, if we look back for it. No ! our baptism is of inexpressible value and comfort, even because it is the act of God ; it has nothing earthly mingled with it ; it was simply his, who chose us, accord-

ing to his eternal purpose, “to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ;” and “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself,” (Eph. i. 5,) making us “in the Beloved,” his own sons, members of his Christ, heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Our comfort, our joy, our peace, our consolation, our glory, is to have, what we have, purely from Him, to have the foundation of our hopes, out of ourselves, [in Christ, which rich privilege Baptism seals to us,] and conveyed by a formal act of his, whereby not according to works of righteousness which we did, but according to his mercy he SAVED US through the washing of regeneration and of the renewal of the Holy Ghost, that Baptism saves us, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is on the right hand of God.” Tracts, No 67, Second edition, p. 89.

If Dr. Pusey will permit me to add the above explanatory words, most heartily will I concur with him in the rich expressions of the above beautiful but indistinct passage.<sup>1</sup> To the faithful man the Baptismal morn is a morn of grateful

<sup>1</sup> It is not within my province or ability to enlighten Dr. Pusey's obscurities or indistinctnesses, or to reconcile his contradictions or inconsistencies ; more especially to make the above passage which asserts the doctrines of grace as they form the very essence of our Seventeenth Article, consistent with those expressions which assert man's spiritual power in the passage considered hereafter as extracted from p. 221. of Dr. Pusey's Sixty-seventh Tract on Baptism.

retrospect indeed ; it was the hour that grafted him into the embrace of his mother the Church, and while from seven years of age to seventy, at that mother's suggestion he "remembers the vows that he made unto God in his baptism ;" his Baptismal morn shall be the date of his blessedness, when he was sealed into the profession and service of his Saviour, and whether Infant or Adult, he may unite with the whole Church and say,

" T'will please us to look back and see,  
That our whole lives were thine."

His Baptism as the instituted mystery of his admission into the Church, "the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us," he regards with grateful complacency as the seal of all his spiritual blessings, and as "ordained by Christ himself as the means whereby he receives the same, and a pledge to assure him" that he has them really and vitally in his possession. It is of this "Baptismal morn" that the Church is ever reminding her Catechumen in the earliest questions she asks him ; and of the name and privileges bestowed on him "in his Baptism," and of the importance of that "morn" she will continue to remind him when in her congregation, or on a bed of sickness to the end of his days.

There are other passages of similar beauty and indistinctness in Dr. Pusey's book, but I am writing a Preface ; and my object is to condense Dr. Pusey's system within the smallest possible

compass that is consistent with the fair and honest exhibition of it.

This view of Baptismal blessedness and privilege I conceive to be in just unison with the Scriptures, our own Established Church, and the general views of our Reformers. First the Scriptures confirm it, as Dr. Pusey proves. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." Rom. vi. 3—6. If the Scripture is to speak its own definite meaning unwarped by human systems and fancies, I see not, whether in Dr. Pusey's or in our common translation, that any other meaning can be attached to this passage, than, that in their Baptism, the faithful Romans to whom he was writing, had actually died to sin, and lived to righteousness; that being buried with him by Baptism into death they should walk in newness of life. And so he tells them ver. 11, how to estimate their present spiritual condition. "Likewise *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God by Jesus Christ our Lord." An actual change had been wrought in them in their baptism; they



had died to sin, and were living to righteousness, and they should act consistently with their privileges, and account or reckon themselves in this highly privileged condition. As Dr. Pusey writes, "the actual life which, by baptism, was infused into us, and by virtue of which it is, that many of us are now walking "in newness of life," are living in Christ. St. Paul speaks throughout of actual facts, which have taken place in us, and duties consequent upon them." Pp. 93, 94. And surely if the Sacrament of Baptism means anything, it means to seal and assure the faith of the believing recipient, that it really enfeoffs him with those blessings which he is privileged to enjoy in Christ. The very object of Christ's Sacramental Institutions is to assure the faith of the Believer in the reality of the divine promises: and it is both his duty and his privilege to cultivate and improve this assurance to his establishment in grace.

Where then is Dr. Pusey's error? Not that with the Apostle he gives due honour to Christ's Institution of Baptism in insisting on its blessed effects in the sanctification of the baptised, but that he ascribes to the seal, what is due to that faith which has apprehended the promise, of which effectual apprehension Baptism is the appointed seal to assure him. The Apostle in the opening of this subject of sanctification, cap. v. 2. states that we have access into a state of grace by faith: "Therefore being justified by faith," our sanctification necessarily follows; first we enjoy the



privilege of adoption ; “ we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peace restored between God and conscience is the sweet privilege of filial adoption and reconciliation, denoting a state of grace and free favour : the next privilege is “ access into this grace ; ” “ By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” The same faith which gives “ peace,” gives access also “ into this grace ” in which the Believer “ stands ; ” and he is formally admitted and effectually sealed and assured of his real entrance into this state of grace, and his possession of all its subsequent privileges by his Baptism, which is a confirming and assuring blessing enabling him to “ *know* ” that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ; ” so that all our sanctification is thereby assured to our faith, in its two great branches, “ a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.” Our “ access into the state of grace wherein we stand was effected by faith : our assurance of this blessedness was our “ Baptism into Jesus Christ ; ” which was the seal, the means, the sign, and the pledge of it. If Dr. Pusey will supply with the Apostle the foundation of faith, the whole exquisite superstructure of privilege as stated by the Apostle with consecutive beauty and propriety, from the sixth to the ninth chapter, will arise in all the commanding majesty of truth, and the Gospel will be consistent with itself.

The following passage affords a fair illustration of Dr. Pusey's principle. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. iii. 27, 28. The main great truth" he adds, "again relates to our privileges. For St. Paul is proving that Christians are "no longer under the law." And this he shews in that the law was "a schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ." But now they were no longer under a schoolmaster, for they had been freed from the bondage of the law, in that they had been made children of God ; "we are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus."—And this our sonship to God, again he proves through our Baptism : "*for*," he says, "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Not only the words, but the argument ought to be heeded : it is not only to be accounted for, that the apostle says, as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, but that he says, "*for* as many as have," so that the "having put on Christ by Baptism" is the meaning whereby they had become the Sons of God, or contains in itself the privilege of being such ; and this might alone shew, that the being clothed with Christ is the gift of God, not any quality in man, (except as his gift involves qualities as its conse-

quence,<sup>1)</sup> for no quality in man can make him a Son of God. He only can be a Son of God, whom God adopts as such : nor does God regard any as his Sons, in consequence of any thing in them ; but first makes them his Sons, that as his Sons, they may do things well-pleasing to Him. But the words thus acquire a very awful meaning ; for if the having put on Christ, the being clothed with him makes us Sons of God, then it makes us so, in that we are “ made members of Christ,” and “ Sons of God,” because members of his ever-blessed Son ; i. e. whoever of us has been baptized, was thereby incorporated into Christ, and so being made a portion and member of the Son of God, partakes of that sonship, and is himself a child of God : so that henceforth the Father looks upon him, not as what he is in himself, but as in, and a part of his well-beloved Son, and loves him with a portion of that ineffable love with which he loves his Son.” Pp. 111, 112.

Nothing surely can be a sounder conclusion than that of the Apostle, that “ as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ ; ” and to the man who has faith to discern and enjoy

<sup>1</sup> God's free gift of eternal life to the soul involves the necessary consequence of God's gifting that soul with faith to apprehend it. “ For by grace are ye saved ; ” salvation is simply the gift of God's grace : and that “ through faith ; ” and that [faith] not of ourselves ; it is the gift of God ” equally with the free gift of salvation which it is given to apply. Eph. ii. 8.

this privilege, (and every baptised person is assumed to have this faith,) it is a most blessed and gratifying consideration that such privileges are his. Dr. Pusey's exposition of them is most just, and evangelical, and most scripturally correct. Rich and desirable as they are, doubtless our union with Christ privileges us with every blessing which he has so justly described above: and he as truly discredits his Baptism, who does not expect and pant after these privileges, as he who ignorantly and indifferently accepts the sign, and expects no more. These are indisputable privileges of Baptism, which every baptised person should be anxious to enjoy. The question is how are we entitled to them? And the answer is, I apprehend, faith in the promise which Baptism conveys, seals, and confirms: and I conceive that Dr. Pusey's reasoning in the former part of this passage, is as truly fallacious, as his description of membership with Christ, and adoption as privileges of Baptism, are just and true in the latter part of it.

For has not attachment to his system blindly led him to a partial adducement of Scripture; and is not the text unduly rent from the context, which if given in its integrity, would soon correct his mistake? The whole of the Apostle's inference is as follows. "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*" For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," &c. If Dr. Pusey's quotation had begun at the twenty-sixth instead of the following

verse, he would have seen, that the Apostle does not say that we are children of God, or that our adoption is in any other way than “by faith in Christ Jesus.” Faith unites us to Christ, God’s only-begotten natural son ; and all we the rest are made his adopted children through faith in Christ Jesus, that being united to him by a living faith, we are made members of Christ, and if members of Christ, then children of God : and in this character, “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ ; “you came to your Baptism in faith of God’s promise in Christ, and this sealed you for all the privileges of children ; for ye have put on Christ, put him on, so that his blood and merits so clothe you, as to conceal the guilt of your sins in your justification, and to suppress the pollution and power of sin in your sanctification ; and your having thus put him on in his double capacity as a Saviour by faith, ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus : and this privilege of adoption was sealed to you in your Baptism ; the rich privileges of which undoubtedly are yours, from the evidence you possess of its efficacy ; that ye have put on Christ, being justified by his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit. I conceive that the just interpretation of this *integral* Scripture which I have given above, exactly illustrates the description of a Sacrament which has been given throughout this Preface : that it confirms faith, and assures all the privileges of salvation to the Believer, to him who

either is, or in virtue of God's promise is assumed to be faithful.

God grant us grace with Dr. Pusey, to entertain the largest ideas of our Baptismal privileges, of union with Christ, adoption and sanctification; and grant us faith with the Scripture and the Church, as the sure foundation and assurance of the same. Dr. Pusey has raised a beautiful superstructure, but, alas! it is baseless assumption, and utterly without a foundation. Admit but the twenty-sixth verse as the foundation, and the building is complete; then faith, and not the seal of it—Baptism would be seen to be the foundation; and if Dr. Pusey had but brought it forward in its due station, as placed by the Holy Spirit in the page of St. Paul, he might have spared himself the trouble of misplacing it in its irrelevant and unintelligible position in p. 114, as well as the large collection of texts adduced to “describe our Christian privilege,” the being “in Christ;” since we “are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Faith is the uniting “means,” which by joining us to Christ, places us in him: and the whole Church being thus “in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one *in* Christ Jesus:” and thus “as many of you as have had your privileges sealed, and have been baptized into Christ, have “put on Christ,” for grace and glory, for time and for eternity. Let the whole Scripture be fairly



adduced as the Holy Spirit has given it, and “the truth as it is in Jesus” will appear.

The remaining passage brought by Dr. Pusey from Col. ii. 10—13. is capable of the same explanation without any depreciation of Baptism. “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the putting clean off the body of the sins of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, having been buried together with him in Baptism, in whom also ye were together raised, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead. And you being dead in trespasses and sins, did he quicken together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses,” &c. Doubtless all the blessed privileges here enumerated belonged to them as they were sealed to them by Christian Circumcision, or Baptism; but their completeness in Christ is mentioned before their Baptism; they were first grafted in him by a living faith, which privileged them with their completeness, of which the subsequent privileges were the substance and evidence; which became theirs not only as they as Believers were made complete by their previous faith; but as the privileges were assured and formally made over to them by their faith of the operation of God which sealed to them all those privileges as their own in their Baptism. They were complete in Christ having applied the



divine promise by faith, before it was sealed to them by their Baptism.

It is impossible that Dr. Pusey can exceed in his pages the luxuriance of Scripture phraseology, in describing the solid privileges of Baptism as sealing the assurance of faith. It is thus that Scripture connects salvation with Baptism. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. iii. 21. Here the declaration is clear, “Baptism doth now save us.” It is impossible to get over or elude this declaration; nothing can be more plain,—“Baptism doth now save us. God be praised for so explicit an announcement of the blessed privilege of Baptism: it saves us. I neither dare, nor do I feel the smallest inclination, God be praised, to detract one iota from the full force of this expression; but on the contrary to give it all its due meaning and power. God be praised for this word, as a portion of the divine word of God’s revealed will, “Baptism doth now save us.” I neither doubt nor hesitate to accept it; but my faith feels the value of this blessed assurance; and with the whole Church of Christ I rejoice to exclaim, “I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins.” Yes, Baptism saves me; let me rejoice in this real privilege, that it does not consist in pouring water on my body, and putting away the filth of the flesh, which my corrupt nature is con-

tinually contracting ; this is but the outward sign ; but that I have the thing signified also, a conscience answering all those questions in sincerity towards God which were proposed to me at my Baptism ; evidenced by the spiritual resurrection of my soul, “ from a death of sin to a life of righteousness,” after the image of my risen Saviour. And can I be too thankful for so blessed a privilege as this ? My Baptism is not a mere sign ; it seals me for heaven ; for the thing signified, “ a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness ” is my evidence that I have not been baptised in vain. So again, Tit. iii. 5, 6.—“ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour,” &c. In this exquisite passage I have the whole privilege of my Baptism, the outward sign and the inward grace. I am saved by mercy ; I am justified by grace, not by any works whether of nature before by my Baptism, or of grace since ; no, “ not by works of righteousness which I have done,” neither of charity, or prayer, or praise, “ but according to his mercy he saved ” me ; simply by his mercy, which he has sealed and confirmed by my Baptism to my soul, first by its outward sign, “ the washing of regeneration in its consecrated water ; and next in the blessed evidence of this “ effectual sign,” the “ renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he has shed

on me abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Here my Baptism is the channel, and seal, and pledge of my salvation by mercy, and of my justification by grace; for God has graciously marked me for his own, by the full virtue of his Sacrament. I have not only the outward sign, but the inward grace also; as a regenerated soul, and a renewed Spirit abundantly testify to me. My Baptism is the assurance of my blessedness.

Yes, says a modern objector; but the Apostle is here speaking of real Baptism. To be sure he is; when the Scripture mentions Baptism, it always means real Baptism, both in the sign and the thing signified; and when the Scripture speaks of the baptised, it always speaks of those who are really baptised; even of Simon as well as others, for it gives men credit for sincerity of profession, and does not charge them with hypocrisy, assuming them to be hypocrites; but on the contrary assuming them to be sincere, it ascribes to them in a judgment of faith and charity the real virtue of baptismal privilege; and with the outward sign ascribes to them the inward grace, the total Sacrament: whether it be Simon or Lydia, the first of the three thousand baptised on the day of Pentecost, as well as the last. It knows nothing of the jealousy of modern unbelief. It trusts to the promises of God, applies the Sacraments as their seal, and assuming that the man is what he professes to be, and believes what he professes to believe,

assigns to him the full benefit of the Sacraments : leaving secret things to Him, to whom alone they belong. The unbelief which doubts the reality of the blessing, whether in the Baptised, the Parents, the Sponsors, or the Church, is the very worm which eats out the core of the blessing, and deprives the Baptised of it. If he does not believe, he has no blessing ; for it is as faith accepts and improves the blessing, that he really has it. <sup>1</sup>

And this view of Baptismal blessedness is fully held by our Church throughout her Liturgy, in *all* her formularies from the first Service to the last. She will never permit us to doubt, but is ever urging us to the full assurance of faith in the divine promises, on which the privileges of Baptism are founded. In her exhortation she says, “ Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe that he will likewise favourably receive this present Infant,” &c. — “ nothing doubting but that he favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours ” — let us *faithfully* and devoutly give thanks unto him—

<sup>1</sup> It is readily admitted that warnings are given on this as on every other privilege, that he “ that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall ; ” as above, that Baptism does not consist in “ the putting away the filth of the flesh,” &c. 1 Pet. iii. 21. that neither “ circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.” Gal. v. 6. “ That he is not a Jew which is one outwardly,” &c. Rom. ii. 28. But what instance have we recorded in Scripture where the professing Candidate for Baptism is rejected, or rather is not encouraged to believe and to be baptised.

“ We give thee humble thanks, for that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in thee,” &c. So again after the Baptism, she expresses her joyful assurance in thanksgiving, breaking forth in uninterrupted sequence immediately after the Lord’s Prayer, “ We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church,” &c. The Church can admit no doubt of Baptismal blessedness, but assumes it as actually conferred on the Infant: and as an evidence of the same, continues its whole education in the same strain of thankful assurance; teaching the Infant accordingly as soon as it can lisp what the blessings of its Baptism really are, instructing it to pronounce as its first word its Christian name, and to assert that it was then actually “ made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;” so that the child is not required to act *for* life, according to the modern perversion of our Catechism Explanations, but *from* life or grace actually imparted by the Spirit in conferring on it these three privileges at its Baptism; in *return* for which, and not in the way of merit or purchase the child is reminded of his three Baptismal vows; and being asked, whether he thinks himself bound to believe, and to do as his Sponsors promised for him, he is taught to break out with holy

joy and thanksgiving; "Yes, verily;" Ay, indeed I do; "and by God's help so I will, and I heartily thank our heavenly Father that he hath called me to this state of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour," &c. He is then consistently taught that he is "not able to do these things of himself," "without God's *special* grace," which "he must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer," that he may feel a personal interest in this Baptismal blessedness; and that while "water is the outward sign, or form" of his Baptism in the name of the Trinity, the inward and spiritual grace of the same Baptism, is, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the child of wrath, he is hereby made the child of grace;" and as "a child of grace" it is required of him to "repent and forsake sin; and stedfastly to believe the promises of God made to him in that Sacrament." Here he sets about the work of his sanctification, not that *he may be* a child of grace, but as already made a child of grace at his Baptism, he is to set about his repentance and faith, as a "member of Christ," &c. drawing special grace out of him by diligent prayer, "that God may give him his grace to continue in this state of salvation unto his life's end." Here the faith of the child in his Baptismal privileges is again and again encouraged as the ground of his growing sanctification and perseverance, or "continuing" in the same.



And here let me pause for a moment, to insist on the important fact especially at this season of renewed attention to education in Church principles, that this is the education marked out by the Church of England for all her children. Here is a divine power of grace provided in the promise of a faithful God, applied and sealed by Baptism, and consistently taught to the child, till it becomes an adult, and so thenceforward to his life's end. The child is not merely instructed in the Catechism as a system of Christian truth, whether of principle in the Creed, or of conduct in the Law; but he is taught that a divine power and privilege was actually communicated to him at his Baptism, even the grace of God to enable him to believe the one, and to perform the other. For he is taught to assert his privilege, that he is actually, as made at his Baptism, "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" that "by God's help" he will both "believe and do," that he is actually "called to this state of salvation," for which he "heartily thanks his heavenly Father," whom he "prays to give him grace, that he may continue in the same unto his life's end;" for which purpose he is taught "diligently to pray for special grace and to resort to the Sacraments as special means of obtaining and confirming that grace, with which this admirable "Instruction" of divine wisdom and power concludes.

I say this "Instruction" of divine wisdom and



power, of which its five parts distinctly consist. For it is not only a compendium of divine knowledge constituting the Christian system of truth; but here is a divine privilege communicated also, even grace, actual grace, to which the faith of the child is to resort, and which he is to apply in his practice, to make his knowledge effectually useful and his privilege effectually conducive to his salvation; so that the education of the Church of England is a system of knowledge to instruct, combined with the power of grace to make such knowledge effectual to the child's salvation. This is what our Church teaches both in her Baptismal Service, and her Catechetical Instruction. And as the child believes the reality of his privileges, prays to God for help, uses his state of grace, and walks as a child of God, so does he avail himself practically of his Baptism, and effectually evidence that he is improving the covenant of mercy, and has not been baptised in vain. Here his regeneration is real.

But so long as neither Parent, nor Sponsors, nor Church, nor Minister believe this, the child is never taught his privileges; his Catechism is a mere unintelligible letter, and his Baptism a mere *opus operatum*. But surely neither the Reformed Church is in fault, nor the Reformers who purified and instituted it: it is the modern Professor who is in fault, whose faith neither discerns the beauty, the Scriptural propriety, nor the spiritual privileges of the system; and the modern Church

possessed of the letter, but ignorant of the doctrine of the Catechism, and faithless of the Baptismal privileges taught by it, suffers the child marked with the outward sign to grow up into an adult, without ever directing his attention to that inward and spiritual grace, which is its real privilege, and efficacy, and power.

And in the practical application of this divine knowledge and power, “so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and is further instructed in the Church Catechism, set forth for that purpose,” the “child” is “brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.” The child is not merely to be instructed in the Creed, &c., and taught these by heart, but he is to be taught them in connection with “the Church Catechism,” that his Baptismal privileges of grace may be so taught him, as to carry out all this knowledge into spiritual practice; and with what pleasure, so instructed and privileged would he then approach the Bishop, and the spiritual Bishop receive him at his Confirmation? With what holy complacency would he express his grateful assurance of the child’s Baptismal regeneration to God, “who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; *strengthen* them, &c.” Here is no doubt expressed of the actual regeneration of the child; but on the contrary an assurance that the child is actually regenerated by

the Holy Ghost ; and additional spiritual strength is prayed for, to CONFIRM him in the same. The same assurance is also expressed in the next Sacrament to which the child is admitted, in which the Church thanks God that he “ thereby assures ” the partakers of it of his “ favour and goodness towards them : ” and so on consistently through every consecutive Service till the Burial Service, when with persevering propriety even to the end of his mortal career, she “ gives hearty thanks, that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our Brother out of the miseries of this sinful world,” with the “ hope ” that he “ rests in Christ.” Here from his initiatory admission into the Church at Baptism, his regeneration issues in conversion, growing sanctification, and the enjoyment of religious privilege and communion, till his maturity of grace prepares him for final glory.

Such is the blessed assurance of our Church from the beginning to the end of the course of the faithful man : it is an education for glory ; it is a spiritual discipline to prepare the soul for heaven : It is more than a system of doctrine, a letter, an “ instruction,” a ceremony, an opus operatum : it is a system to the faithful soul communicating a divine influence, with every means of grace confirming his graces, securing his adoption, maturing his sanctification, and by a consistent religious walk perfecting his soul for glory : and all this blessedness according to our Church was conveyed and signed and sealed to the faithful soul at his

Baptism, from the incipient regeneration of that soul to the crowning glorification of the same.

And here I must honestly confess that unless the accelerated momentum now given to educate our children for the Church of England proceed on this practice of spiritually applying our Baptismal Service, our Catechism, and all the kindred Services of our Church upon this principle of divine promise acted out by faith, by all the Parties interested in the Baptism, i. e. every member of the Church, I have little hope that it will be attended with much effect: for to baptise a child with water, to commit a Catechism to memory, to teach a child to read his Bible, and even to digest its contents, is not a Christian Education according to the Services of our Church. All this should be done; but it is all inefficient if the other be left undone; for if there be no faith in the promise, the power that sets the machine in motion is wanting; and the whole is nothing more than an imposing external, a mere outside without soul or spirit. And let me add that this never can effectually oppose the progress of Popery among us: for after all it is but essential Popery; it is one system of externals opposed to another system of externals. And Popery being the most finished system of deception that Satan has ever yet devised to delude the senses, gratify the pride, and suit the self-idolatry of man,—being the master-piece of error provided for antichrist himself,—delusive as our modern system is, we have no hope of success in the race:

for in matching error with error, Popery with her scarlet glitter and her garish bravery, is secure in her triumph of delusion; while the advance of the bland and insinuating assumptions of Puseyism, and the millions of tracts and books annually circulated throughout our Church, after the model of Nelson's divinity and that of "The whole duty of man," the modern school of pre-requisite conditions, directly opposed to the spirit of free grace insisted on, and most beautifully illustrated in the whole Liturgy of our Church from her Baptismal to her Burial Service, directly counteract the free salvation of Protestant truth: and thus our Established Church is gradually preparing not merely as a passive victim, but an active partisan to swell the ranks of "the Man of Sin," and to secure his final triumph over herself.

The above joyful assurance of Baptismal blessedness as testified and illustrated by our Church experimentally throughout all her Services from first to last, (for the triumph of the Burial Service is but the crown and issue of the initiatory Baptismal,) might be deemed sufficient to exhibit her Scriptural application of the blessings of Baptism. I will however strengthen this impression by adding one or two passages from the Homilies. The following words occur in Homily III, Part 3. "Our office is, not to pass the time of this present life unfruitfully and idly, after that we are baptized or justified," &c. Here the two terms *baptized* and *justified* are evidently used synonymously;

and that with good reason, as our regeneration at our Baptism is the inlet to every other spiritual privilege,—our calling, our conversion, our justification, our adoption, our sanctification, our future religious walk, and our final glorification : as the future blade, and straw, and corn is in the seed deposited in the earth. Apply but the principles of vegetation, the rain, the sun, &c., and the “bare grain” is the future crop. To say then that we are “baptized,” is to say that we are called, and justified and sanctified ; for in effect all these privileges are in Baptism as an “effectual sign of grace,” as Baptismal regeneration germinates and expands into spiritual growth, and matures the soul for glory. To say then that we are thus baptised is to say that we are saved ; and thus “Baptism doth also now save us.” 1 Pet. iii. 21. Let us not contradict Scripture, with the modern school, but let us rather confirm it with our Church, and our vital experience of grace. For the child thus regenerated at his Baptism is saved.

Again, Dr. Pusey very appropriately quotes the beautiful passage from the Homily on the Resurrection to show that the persons therein addressed “were not in the position of men called for the first time to take upon them a certain course, and promised an ulterior reward ; rather they had received already an inestimable gift, and this gift they were to keep and guard.” p. 107. Undoubtedly this very beautiful Homily all the



way through addresses us, as baptised into real blessings, as responsible for the same, and as bound to improve and enjoy them to the utmost. "What a shame were it for us, *being thus so freely and clearly washed from our sins*, to return to the filthiness thereof again? What a folly were it, *thus endowed with righteousness*, to lose it again? What madness were it to lose the inheritance, *that we be now set in*, for the vile and transitory pleasures of sin? Ye must consider that ye be therefore *cleansed and renewed*, that ye should from henceforth serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of your lives, that ye may reign with him in everlasting life. If ye refuse so great grace, whereto ye be called, what other thing do ye, than heap to you damnation more and more, and so provoke God to cast his displeasure upon you, and to revenge this mockage of his holy Sacraments in so great abusing of them?" This is true Scriptural and Church of England preaching. The Professor is assumed to have received his Baptism as an "effectual sign of grace," is called upon to improve it, and is expostulated with "mockage of God's holy Sacraments by abusing of them." Thus the Apostle addresses himself "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints," or literally called saints, 1 Cor. i. 2. and yet he could not speak unto them as "unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even unto babes in Christ." 1 Cor. iii. 1. Invested with



Christian privileges, they belonged to the Church and are exhorted to grow from babes of grace, into the full maturity of manhood.

For the evidence borne by our own Reformers, as well as by the Confessions of the Reformed Churches of the real blessedness of Baptismal Regeneration, I must generally refer the Reader to the large extracts adduced from them from page 193 to page 229 of the following work ; but I may describe the whole in the following words of Archbishop Cranmer expressly addressed to children : “ Hitherto you have heard what we promise to God when we are baptized. Now learn also I pray you, what God worketh in us by Baptism, and what benefits he giveth us in the same. For baptism is not water alone, but it is the water of God, and hath his strength by the word of God, and is a seal of God’s promise. *Wherefore* it doth work in us all those things *whereunto* God hath *ordained* it. Wherefore we ought not to have an eye only to the water, but to God rather, which did ordain the baptism of water, and commanded it to be done in his name. For he is Almighty and able to work in us by baptism forgiveness of our sins, and all those wonderful effects and operations for the which he hath ordained the same, although man’s reason is not able to conceive the same.” He then proceeds to enumerate the advantages of Baptism. They are not called upon to doubt of their blessings but to improve them ; not to reason upon a mystery which “ man’s *reason*

is not able to receive," but which faith must receive and apply as its own.

It is quite clear then, I conceive from the concurrent voice of Scripture, of our Established Church, and of the Reformation, that Baptismal blessings as conferred on the faithful cannot be too highly estimated; for thus Baptism seals every privilege of God's elect from incipient grace to final glory. Dr. Pusey therefore cannot be charged with excess in describing the measure of Baptismal blessings, for they are immeasurable. He describes the fruit, but alas! he has planted no root in the earth to bear it; he describes the blessings of Baptism, but he does not insist on that indispensable faith in the promise of a covenant God which alone qualifies for these blessings: for it is faith alone that can apply them specially and individually. The conclusion of our Church is irrefragable: "In such *only* as *worthily* receive the same [the Sacrament,] they have a wholesome effect or operation:" Art. XXV. the worthiness of the recipient is his faith in the promise: and unless he "draw near with faith," he never can "receive" any "holy Sacrament" to his true and solid "comfort."

Let us now, that we may not mistake what Puseyism really is, consider an example of the foregoing erroneous principle, and adduce Dr. Pusey's own illustration of his system in the instance of St. Paul's conversion; in which he contracts his system into an intelligible focus. "But as yet

neither were his sins forgiven, nor had he received the Holy Ghost; much less then was he born again of the Spirit, before it was conveyed to him through his Saviour's Sacrament." And he represents "this view of St. Paul's case," as "the result of the examination of the words of Holy Scripture in their plain meaning." Pp. 217, 218. May I adventure to hint a counter position, that a thorough examination of the words of Holy Scripture will produce a very different "result," and though miraculous as to the means, will bring St. Paul's case simply within the ordinary course of the Baptism of all faithful men, who "hear, believe, and are baptized?" Acts xviii. 8.

Let us apply to Scripture then, and inquire whether St. Paul "having been miraculously converted, was regenerated, justified by faith, pardoned, had received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized." Dr. Pusey asserts, "not so," or that the "Holy Scripture" disallows the spiritual renewal, "if we consider it attentively." May the God of truth grant us the plain and simple knowledge of his own word.

"Baptism of St. Paul. It is commonly thought that he, having been miraculously converted, was regenerated, justified by faith, pardoned, had received the Holy Ghost before he was baptised. Not so, however, Holy Scripture, if we consider it attentively: before his Baptism he appears neither to have been pardoned, regenerated, justified, nor enlightened."—A man named

Ananias was sent to him "that he might receive his sight." "But as yet, says Dr. Pusey, neither were his sins forgiven, nor had he received the Holy Ghost, much less then was he born again of the Spirit, before it was conveyed to him, through his Saviour's Sacrament." Pp. 216, 217.

The Scripture account is as follows—"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice, saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? and he said, who art thou, Lord? and the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do," &c. Acts ix. 3—6. To this may be added the Apostle's own statement, Acts xxvi. 15—18, to which the reader is referred. On the appearance of this "heavenly vision," St. Paul said, "who art thou, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Here every thing but the miraculous appearance of our Lord agrees with the ordinary circumstances of conversion. Here is a Preacher, faith, and afterwards Baptism as the seal of it. Our Lord is the preacher; first in the way of expostulation, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest

thou me ? Secondly, in the declaration of himself, and the impossibility of Paul's success in persecuting him. Here was the word of life preached by the Lord of life himself in person. This word he accompanied by his grace, and thus faith was wrought in the heart of the Apostle, which he expressed by the declaration of a subdued will, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" In which expression we have first repentance for the past, "Lord, my will has hitherto been opposed to thee, for I have been hitherto "a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim. i. 13.) to thee and thine ; but now thy will be mine : henceforth, Lord what wilt thou have me to do ?" The same words are equally a declaration of the Apostle's *faith*. "Thee whom I have hitherto treated as an impostor, I confess now as my Lord and God : now I receive thee as my Jesus, my Saviour, and as the evidence of faith render the tribute of my obedience ; "Lord what wilt thou have me to do ?" Here we have just that on the Apostle's part which "is required of persons to be baptised ;" "Repentance" and "Faith ;" and on the part of God, his lively word quickened by his Spirit into spiritual life : and the word and Spirit having made the Apostle a Believer, he is entitled to the subsequent seal of Baptism, which is administered in due season. And this is the ordinary course of the divine proceeding according to our Lord's institution, "teach," "believe," "baptize ;" and the uniform practice

of the Church confirmed from St. Peter's first sermon to the present hour—the “word” preached, the “word received,” the hearers “baptized.” Acts ii. 41. Here is no extraordinary case; all is in the ordinary course of our Lord's institution. Christ preaches the word, Paul believes it; and his faith and Christ's mercy are confirmed by the seal of Baptism.

But it is said, as in the above extract from Dr. Pusey, the Apostle was “miraculously converted.” If it is intended to express that the appearance of our Lord was miraculous, it is admitted: but if it is intended that this miraculous appearance converted the Apostle, it is denied. It was not the miraculous appearance that converted the Apostle's heart and changed his will; for nothing external either natural or miraculous, ordinary or extraordinary, has this power over the spirit of the soul. It was the word of Christ enforced by the power of the Holy Spirit, as in ordinary cases, which effected this conversion; as our Homily plainly testifies: “and who can choose but marvel to consider that Peter should become, of a simple fisher, a chief and mighty Apostle? Paul of a cruel and bloody persecutor, a faithful disciple of Christ, to teach the Gentiles? Such is the power of the Holy Ghost, *to regenerate men*, and as it were to bring them forth anew, so that they shall be nothing like the men they were before.” Hom. XXVIII. P. 1. It was the power of the Holy Ghost which accompanied the word of Christ, and regenerated Paul,



and converted his will to God, enabling him to say, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" And this is the sound evidence of his regeneration, in conjunction with the spirit of prayer. "Behold he prayeth!" And his subsequent Baptism both conveyed and assured this regeneration, and sealed the blessing to him. Here the Homily states that St. Paul was "regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost," without any mention of his Baptism whatever; and we have the evidences of his solid regeneration in his repentance and faith, and prayer and humiliation, distinctly before his Baptism. We may safely conclude therefore, from the plain letter of Holy Scripture, that he was regenerated before his introduction to Ananias, as well as from the words of our Homily, ascribing his regeneration to the power of the Holy Ghost, without any mention of his Baptism. Now in his regeneration, the spiritual child was born, and in this birth are included all the privileges and blessings of the future man; so that being "regenerated," he was "justified by faith, pardoned, had received the Holy Ghost, before he was baptized;" and "before his Baptism he appears to have been pardoned, regenerated, justified, and enlightened;" and being thus regenerated, "he was born again of the Spirit, before it was conveyed to him through his Saviour's Sacrament." His case, with the exception of the miraculous appearance ranges exactly with the ordinary cases of Baptismal introduction to Christian communion,—preaching, faith, Baptism.



Dr. Pusey adds, “ This view of St. Paul’s case, which was the result of the examination of the words of Holy Scripture in their plain meaning, it is very satisfactory to find altogether anticipated by St. Chrysostom,” and other Fathers quoted by him. But on examining their words, I cannot but think, that they distinctly confirm the view I have given of St. Paul’s case above, and as distinctly overthrow Dr. Pusey’s statement of it, for the confirmation of which they are adduced.

First as to Chrysostom, “ Not even upon Paul did grace come immediately ; but three days intervened in which he was blind, being purified, and prepared for its reception by fear. God first prepares the soul, by filling it with trouble, and then pours forth his grace.—Why did he neither eat nor drink ? He was condemning himself for what he had done ; he was confessing all ; he was praying ; he was calling upon God ;” and “ Ananias taught him nothing, but only baptized him. But as soon as he was baptized, he drew down on himself a great grace from the Spirit, through his zeal and great earnestness.” P. 218. The regeneration of the Apostle is described in the early part of this passage in its usual process, according to the Apostle’s own description of it, “ Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again, to fear.” Rom. viii. 15. The Holy Spirit was producing the new birth of his soul, as a Spirit of bondage under the convictions of the Law ; oppressing the conscience by a sense of sin, with its deserved punishment, and

thus generating a salutary fear through the Spirit of bondage, which is the usual precursor of that grace which is the very expression of filial fear, and privileged adoption: it is the process of the child's birth, before regeneration actually takes place, when this salutary servile fear issues in the regeneration of the soul, as the pangs of travail precede the birth: and thus "three days intervened, in which he was blind, being purified and prepared for the reception of grace, by fear," which preparation issued in that grace which spoke the regeneration of his soul. All this while "he was condemning himself for what he had done; he was confessing all; he was praying; he was calling upon God;" and what is all this, but the genuine evidence of a soul under the process of renewal? Self-condemnation, confession, prayer, and an agonized spirit evidencing its repentance and faith," by calling upon God, the solid assurance of a regenerated heart: a heart so regenerated, so "purified," so "prepared," that "Ananias taught him nothing, but only baptized him," from the assurance that the seal of his regeneration was due to a soul so truly evidencing its regeneration by the Spirit of godly fear. And "as soon as he was baptized, he drew down on him a great grace from the Spirit," even the assurance and confirmation of Christ's grace to his soul, and of his faith in his Saviour's promise conveyed and established to him "through his Saviour's Sacrament." And thus I conceive that the

evidence of Chrysostom as adduced by Dr. Pusey himself, expressly confirms the ordinary course of Baptismal communion laid down in Scripture—preaching and holy discipline, the soul “purified and prepared for its reception,” and then the seal of Baptism actually conferred: “for thus here also, God first prepares the soul, by filling it with trouble, and then pours forth his grace:” the preparation issues in the previous grace, which Baptism both conveys and confirms; or as our Article correctly states, “doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.”

Nor does it appear to me that Augustine’s testimony as adduced by Dr. Pusey to prove that grace does not precede Baptism, is in the least degree more happy than that of Chrysostom. “Beware we of one of those most proud and most dangerous temptations [looking for immediate revelations of God, independently of the ordinances of the Church] and let us rather think that the Apostle Paul himself, although cast to the earth, and instructed by a divine and heavenly voice, was yet sent to a man that he might receive the Sacraments, and be united to the Church.” P. 218. Here we have the first part of the process distinctly pronounced: St. Paul was “instructed by a divine and heavenly voice;” and the second part not indeed expressed but implied, he was “instructed” effectually, taught divinely, vitally, and experimentally to the production of

repentance and faith; and then thirdly, “sent to a man that he might receive the Sacraments, and be united to the Church:” he was sent to a man that he might receive the public recognition of his faith, and be openly joined to the Church, as the renewed soul ever is, for the attested confirmation of its renewal by Baptism, and reception into the Church of Christ. I see nothing strained in this interpretation. Augustine states the same process in St. Paul’s case which is consistent with Scripture and the usual practice of the Church.

Tertullian’s words seem, in plain phrase, to be directly opposed to the very purpose they are brought to prove. “Then Paul also, when he believed, was baptized.” And this it was which the Lord had enjoined him, saying, “Arise, and enter into Damascus; there it shall be shown thee what thou oughtest to do,” namely to be baptized, which alone was wanting to him. For he had sufficiently learned and believed that the Nazarene was the Lord, the Son of God.” Here Tertullian expressly confirms the sense I have given above to Augustine’s words, that Paul’s teaching or instruction was effectual in producing faith; “For he had sufficiently learned and believed that the Nazarene was the Lord,” &c. He expressly states also, “Then Paul also, when he believed, was baptized.” Thus, when “he had sufficiently learned,” “he believed,” and “when he believed,” he “was baptized,” according to the usual process of our Lord’s institution: and

having “learned” and “believed,” he was directed to “Arise and enter into Damascus,” namely to be baptized, “which alone was wanting to him.” All these three Fathers plainly admit that Paul was “purified” “prepared” and believed before he was baptized; he must necessarily therefore have been “born again of the Spirit, before it was conveyed to him through his Saviour’s Sacrament.” I trust therefore that Dr. Pusey will not accuse me of discourtesy, if on this occasion I transfer these three venerable Fathers from his table, and “with the glorious company of the Apostles” and Reformers provide them a seat at my own. And if Dr. Pusey will allow me to avail myself of the privilege of this introduction to him, he may yet further allow me to assure him, that I know no name of living men that I should add with more pleasure to those of this blessed company than his own. He should at least find himself associated with one who would cordially join him in extolling the privileges of Holy Baptism, and who would give perpetuity to his praises, by fixing them, not on fancy and misinterpreted Scripture, but on the solid foundation that can uphold so goodly a superstructure,—Holy Baptism founded on faith in the promises of a covenant God.

The case of Cornelius, I apprehend, falls exactly under the rule of our Lord’s institution “teach,” “believe,” “baptize.” Dr. Pusey says, “the case of Cornelius is very remarkable.” P. 219.

The circumstances of it are doubtless remarkable as ushering into the Church “the Father of the Gentile Church;” but the circumstances of his conversion and Baptism do not materially vary from the ordinary cases of Scripture: he is taught, believes, and is baptised. “He was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway:” and he had this testimony of his faith and charity from heaven, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God;” but he must yet know the way of God more perfectly before his Baptism; and therefore he must “call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter,” who should “tell” him “what he ought to do.” Acts x. 2—6. Here then we have distinctly recounted his faith and charity, for accepted prayer can alone arise from faith in the Saviour; and give birth to that charity which is pleasing to God. Peter confirms this character under his general assertion drawn from the special instance of Cornelius, “he that feareth” God “and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.” Cornelius was therefore now accepted with God, and had faith and charity, the solid evidences of a sound regeneration. At the conclusion of the Apostle’s address “the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word,” doubtless both in his ordinary influences and his extraordinary “gift,” v. 45. Then followed the Baptism of all present as well as that of Cornelius. “And he command-



ed them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Here is the ordinary course strengthened by the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit prior to Baptism; the ordinary graces of faith and love having been exhibited previously by Cornelius; and his Baptism follows as the seal and confirmation of the same. Here all is in just keeping with the ordinary institution of Baptism. He is taught, whether by Peter, or previously by devout Jews or Christians at Cæsarea, for Paul had once been there since his conversion, Acts ix. 30. though it was but for a short season—he believes as his prayers and alms testify, and he is baptised.

The following passage of Dr. Pusey's under the head of "Baptism of Cornelius" appears to me to be a most extraordinary tissue of error, if Scripture as interpreted by our Church is to be the gage of truth. "Cornelius was already in a measure sanctified," [i. e. before his interview with Peter,] "and therefore he who 'giveth more grace,' translated him into the kingdom of his dear Son, chose him first of the Gentile world to be a member of Christ, regenerated him and then sanctified him wholly; that 'all who glory, might' henceforth 'glory in the Lord.'" P. 221. That is, Cornelius was already "sanctified in a measure;" and "therefore" because he was thus "sanctified in a measure" (and who sanctified him? did he sanctify himself?) he who giveth more grace translated him into the kingdom of his dear Son: i. e. on account of the previous merit of his sanctifica-



tion, or his grace of condignity, “chose him first of the Gentile world to be a member of Christ,” i. e. elected him on account of his sanctification, in direct contradiction to St. Paul’s assertion “he hath *chosen us in him that we should be holy*,” &c. not *because* we are already sanctified, or holy, but that *we should be holy* : and having thus translated and chosen him because he was “already in a measure sanctified,” “he regenerated him, and then sanctified him wholly.” That is, Cornelius having already attained a measure of spiritual growth, or sanctification, and being “therefore” translated and chosen, was regenerated and sanctified wholly : or, in plain terms, having already attained a measure of spiritual growth, he again became a child, was regenerated and born again, and afterwards made a whole spiritual man : or having “already” attained “a measure” of manhood, he was regenerated on this account, born again as a child, and then grew up to perfect manhood, or was “sanctified wholly :” and for this purpose, that “all who glory might henceforth glory in the Lord :” his first sanctification being his own act and giving him cause to glory in himself ; God on account of this measure of sanctification translated him, chose him, regenerated and sanctified him, that henceforth he might “glory in the Lord.”

And the passage proceeds in the same confused style. “Cornelius had faith, (for “without faith it is impossible to please God,”) he had love ; he

had self-denial; he had had the power of faith given to him, but he had not Christian faith, nor love, nor self-denial, nor prayer, for as yet he knew not Christ: he could not call God Father, for as yet he knew not the Son." "Cornelius had faith;" who gave him that faith, that very faith, "without which it is impossible to please God:" true Scripture faith, the faith of Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and all the worthies there recounted. Heb. xi. "He had love and self-denial;" who gave them to him? Were they the fruits of his faith, or the produce of his unregenerated, (as Dr. Pusey states,) and yet sanctified nature? "He had had the power to pray *given* to him." Who *gave* it, but the Lord of all faith and grace, to this sanctified, and yet unregenerated man? "But he had not Christian faith, nor love, nor self-denial, nor prayer; for as yet he knew not Christ." Did Abel know Christ? Did Enoch and Noah know Christ? If not, who was the object of their faith? and on the promise of what Saviour was it bottomed, unless of that Saviour, the seed of the woman promised in Paradise? and Dr. Pusey applies to Cornelius the very passage applied to them by the Apostle, as descriptive of their faith, and yet as he states, "he had not Christian faith, nor love, nor self-denial, nor prayer." Are not these graces of the Spirit? And did ever human soul possess these graces, without being regenerated by the Spirit? Did Cornelius sanctify himself, and give himself these

graces? or were they the gift of the Spirit? Doubtless the latter, for nature can give no grace; and if the Spirit gave them, they were sound evidences of his regeneration by the Spirit, that Spirit effectually applying Christ to him as his Saviour, before he saw Peter, before “the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out on” him, and before he was baptised. If Cornelius sanctified himself by the power of his own nature, he was thus previously sanctified, and of necessity regenerated; for sanctification is the *progress* of that life, of which regeneration is the beginning; but this is an absurdity. If he was previously sanctified by the Holy Ghost, as he alone could be, he was first regenerated by the power of the same Spirit; for sanctification is to regeneration, what progressive youth or manhood is to the child born; it is the progress of life towards its perfection. Cornelius was therefore regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit before Peter saw him, or any effect of Peter’s visit had been produced, and his Baptism was the seal of the same. He “was already in a measure sanctified,” says Dr. Pusey; and if so, as the birth precedes the growth of the man, he must already have been regenerated; and if so, “he was born again of the Spirit,” like St. Paul, before it was conveyed to him through his Saviour’s Sacrament.” P. 217. It was this which both “quicken’d” the same, and “also strengthened and confirmed his faith,” Art. XXV. but “he was born again by the

Spirit," before he received "his Saviour's Sacrament."

I proceed with the next member of the passage. "Faith and repentance, in adults, are necessary to the new birth, but they are not the new birth." Certainly not; but they are indisputable evidences that it has really taken place, as the cries and motions of the new-born infant are not its birth, but they are most certain evidences that it is born; and both adults and infants are "required" to have both repentance and faith before they are baptised, as evidences of that new birth which is then conveyed and confirmed to them by the seal—adults as they profess them with their own voice, and infants first, as "they promise them both by their sureties;" and secondly, as they have them both in semine, through the faith of all Parties in "the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament;" as John the Baptist had them, who was sanctified, (and the nature of sanctification consisting of repentance and faith, is ever the same) from his Mother's womb: or as David had them; as he declared, "Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my Mother's breasts." Psalm xxii. 9. In which latter instance at least, as at present in the Church, faith applies the general promise to the spiritual benefit of the child; and the seed of all grace is in the promise, and as the faith of the baptised expands, all graces expand into life with it. And this faith and repentance the Church "requires," and

assumes to be both in adult and infant, as evidences of their regeneration, before she will consent to seal them by Baptism : so that though they are not the new birth of such, they are solid evidences that the spiritual child is born ; and this evidence she will have, before she will affix the seal of her baptism to the “ instrument ” of their introduction to her Congregation.

The next sentence concludes the passage. “ That [new birth] God imparteth, as it pleaseth him, according to the depths of his wisdom ; it dependeth not, as faith and repentance, in some measure, may, upon the will of man, but of God, who calleth into his Church whom he will.” This passage appears to be a direct contradiction : Most assuredly God’s will is free ; he imparts the new birth as it pleases him, and “ calls into his Church whom he will ; ” his election first selects, and his calling of the person saved, carries his election into effect : but does not the same mercy which imparts the new birth, according to the depths of its wisdom, equally reserve to itself the sovereign pleasure of dispensing its evidences, repentance and faith also ? And in what respect do these two graces depend on the will of man more than his new birth does ? Without the new birth, he cannot have these graces ; and he has just as much power by nature to exercise his will in procuring the new birth, as he has in procuring the surest evidences which constitute that without which it cannot exist—repentance and faith. But

according to our Church, we have neither will for the new birth, nor for repentance and faith in any “measure;” for we must have “the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will,” (and that in the smallest “measure,” for the smallest “measure” is the effect of “preventing grace,” as well as the largest,) “and working with us when we have that good will.”

Art. X. And it is a plain contradiction to say that “faith and repentance depend in some measure upon the will of man,” and to say that God “calleth into his Church whom he will;” for if God exercises his sovereign will in “calling” a soul, the regeneration and sanctification of that soul is simply the effect of its calling; that calling being the first part of the developement of God’s mercy to the elect soul, according to the Seventeenth Article, “they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be [first] called according to God’s purpose by his Spirit,” &c. agreeable to Scripture, “whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified.” &c. Rom. viii. 30. The effectual calling of a soul by the Spirit, is the primary privilege which declares its election, and is the evidence and earnest of, and admission to, every other privilege of grace. Will Dr. Pusey allow me to say, that if he will but study the Articles of his Protestant Church, he would become a sounder Divine?

Here then I trust we have Dr. Pusey’s system



laid before us both in its principle, practice, and consequences: and as compared with the word and practice of Scripture, the uniform doctrine and practice of the Reformation, and of our own blessed Church especially, the counter-evidence of the very Fathers he has brought to support his own errors, and the awful tissue of contradictions which crown, illustrate, and characterize his system as erroneous, to what conclusion are we fairly brought, but that it is a system fair to the eye, but destructive to the soul; a system which professes to honour God, and to benefit man, but which really ascribes to the water and ceremony of Baptism, what is due to the promise and Spirit of a faithful God, and to the outward act and observance of a ceremony, what is due to the faith and renewed nature of a believing soul: a system fraught with awful delusion, ascribing to nature the privileges of grace, and to sense the exclusive benefits of faith, leading ignorant and unwary souls through the easy paths of self-satisfaction and self-complacency, till at once they lift up their eyes in hell in unavailing surprise and irretrievable dismay.

To sum up the subject in brief, it is quite evident that the blessings conveyed by the Gospel, are wholly independent of the seal which ratifies them; and that we may truly “appropriate to ourselves the gift, independently of the channel through which it is conveyed” and confirmed. For though “Baptism as the means of our union



with Christ," as Dr. Pusey states, p. 134, "is the act which conveys to us, either an immediate possession, or as an earnest, all our subsequent spiritual blessings," yet we must protest against their being necessarily "subsequent" to Baptism, either as the means or the earnest. Baptism is as our Church expresses it both "a means" or channel whereby we receive an inward and spiritual grace; and a "pledge" or earnest "to assure us" that we receive it: but it is chiefly such, as it confirms, and ratifies, and seals: faith being the means and instrument of union to Christ, as both Scripture and our Church largely declare; for it is "faith whereby we stedfastly believe the promises of God made to" us "in that Sacrament" which unites us to Christ; as in the other Sacrament, faith is the only recipient of Christ's mystical body and blood, for they "*are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper:*" all other receivers only eat and drink to their condemnation. And thus we have every privilege of Baptism stated as belonging to the Believer, without any reference to Baptism whatever. Regeneration itself is ours by that which makes the water a Sacrament, the word of God. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. i. 2, 3. THE WORD OF GOD is the seed of immortality, the alone seed of eternal life, whether connected with the water which forms the Sacrament in union with it, or

acting independently of such means without it. So again not our regeneration only, but our whole salvation, from our new birth to our final glorification, is ours independent of the seal or means of Baptism. "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works," or any outward means whatever, "but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. We are "called according to God's purpose," of election, "by his Spirit working in due season," whether before Baptism, at Baptism, or "subsequently" to Baptism: we "through *grace* obey the calling," and not through any outward means, but by grace, whether accompanying any outward means or not; we "be justified freely," by the blood of Christ accepted by faith; both that blood and the faith which accepts it, being free gifts of God, with or without any instituted forms, *freely*: we "be made Sons of God by adoption," not by any human means, but "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself." Ephes. i. 5. So again our sanctification, the evidence and healthy progress of our regeneration, is something quite independent of our Baptism, and is simply the work of free grace, for we be *made like the image* of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ," we are a new creation, "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. ii.

10. And so, our "religious walk and final glory," are not stated as necessarily connected with Baptism; but with that which makes Baptism an indisputable reality, the Holy Spirit of God, "whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. iv. 30. The privileges of the covenant are wholly independent of the ordinance which conveys and confirms them, as the terms of an indenture are from the seal that assures them. And the Seventeenth Article, in consistency with many places of Scripture, states them without any express reference to Baptism whatever.

I might have gone into further detail: but my design was not an answer to Dr. Pusey's book; but a statement of his system sufficiently clear to enable us to understand what it is, and by comparing it with what I conceive to be the truth of Scripture, and the Reformation, to show its inconsistency therewith. I must confess that his mode of stating it throughout his four hundred pages, is peculiarly misty and difficult to understand: my object has been to state it in its principle, and to illustrate it by some of the instances he has adduced. As to a full answer to his book, at once to meet the main argument of his system, and all the manifold errors which incidentally occur in his pages, and are either results, or necessary accompaniments of his system, it would take a volume I conceive nearly if not quite as bulky as Bishop Jewell's Defence of his Apology against Harding. I have given a specimen of his errors

as comprised in the passage on which I have commented above, but though they lie not throughout his book in so accumulated a mass, yet the master-error—sense for faith and matter for spirit,—is a monster of so prolific a character, that there is not an error of the grossest kind that Popery contains, which may not be traced to Dr. Pusey's master-principle; so that in fact Bishop Jewell's answer to Harding contains the most complete answer to Dr. Pusey's book, as will be evident to every intelligent reader; especially to one tolerably versed in the volumes of our Reformers. That the school of Dr. Pusey therefore should repudiate the Reformers, is quite necessary to the success of their semi-popish system.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The curious *melange* of Authors from Bishop Andrews to Bishop Wilson, now in course of publication by the School of Puseyism, under the title of “Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology,” which is recommended to the patronage of Churchmen, as “inculcating the Doctrines and Discipline of the Anglican Branch of the Catholic and Apostolic Church,” as a body of divinity is vague, indefinite, and contradictory, and is not only utterly unsupported by any authority of the Church, but is a manifest superseding and exclusion of the authority of the Reformers by excluding their works. This library, in addition to that of the Modern Church circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, together with the modern publications of the Dissenting School edited by Churchmen and Dissenters, and the recent translations and importations of German and American Divines, is well calculated to fill the whole field of Orthodox, and Evangelical inquiry and reading, and effectually to supersede all attention to the works of the Re-

To sum up in few words ; this system puts the seal for the promise—the ratification for the thing ratified,—the adjunct for the principal—the conditional means for the end—the pledge for the favour conferred—the sign for the thing signified—sight and sense for faith and grace—the outward sign of water, for the water consecrated by the word of promise, and sanctified into a divine mystery by the quickening Spirit—the element for the Sacrament. But “ *aliud est elementum, alia consecratio* ” as Bishop Jewell quotes from Ambrose. Faith alone can receive a mystery : and to all but the faithful, whether Infant or Adult, the administration of Baptism is but superstition and delusion.

But there is another class of error on this subject, as truly detrimental, I conceive, to the honour and effectual operation of this Sacrament of Baptism, as that of Dr. Pusey and his adherents.

The favourers of these sentiments hold much of the truth of the Gospel ; they perceive and value its spiritual character ; they see clearly that “ the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,” that it consists not in any outward ordinance what-

formers. Surely then the time is arrived, to arouse the Churchman of the Reformation from his supineness, and to stimulate him to carry into effect the recommendations of the Author made many years since on this subject. See the following work, pp. 414—425. The Author is happy to express a sanguine hope, that the works of the Reformers may shortly be offered to the public, on the principle of the above Library.

ever, but is essential truth and vital Christianity, or "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17. The fall of man by sin, his restoration by mercy, and his renewal by grace, forms the subject of their ministry ; and they are zealous supporters of Evangelical institutions, and active agents of Parochial order, charity, and discipline ; devoted to their ministerial work, and rich blessings to the Church. But Baptismal blessedness enters not into their Clerical expectation or ministration : the orderly administration of the Baptismal Service in the church according to the letter of the rubric may be periodically and punctually performed, and a certain degree of vigilance exercised in the appointment of such Sponsors as the Church may approve ; but their faith does not anticipate a nascent Church from the Baptism of the Infants of the Church. They neither exercise this faith themselves, nor do they call upon faithful Parents to entertain it according to God's promise to them ; nor on holy persons to become Sponsors to their children, nor on the Church at large under their ministerial charge, to encourage the same faith, by taking a lively part in the administration of the Sacrament, to join the prayers with a cordial interest in the baptised, or to consider them in a judgment of faith and charity as God's "faithful and elect children," the seed of the Church, and plants of righteousness : nor are the people urged to remember them with their prayers and holy sympathies, issuing in a spiritual



interest for the future welfare of the baptised, as they may have opportunity hereafter, whether in schools or in private; thus stimulating the whole Church to Christian Communion, as instanced in Baptismal interests and regards, both towards the Adult and the Infant. Neither does their faith in Baptismal promises affect their treatment of the Infant in opening to him, as he can receive it, the connexion of his Catechism with his Baptism, so plainly laid down in its four opening questions; reminding him first, when his Christian name was given him, at his Baptism, what promises were then made by Christ to him, in his three privileges into which he was then admitted, "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" what promises were then made for him, in return for those free promises of Christ; and how firmly the honour of Christ and his own salvation, bind him to believe and to do as was then promised for him; that he verily thinks so; that "by God's help" and not in his own strength he will do so; that he heartily thanks his heavenly Father for calling him to this state of salvation of free promise and unmerited favour through Jesus Christ his Saviour; and prays to God for grace to continue in the same to his life's end. All this is not so understood by the Minister and so explained to the child, as though he had been made partaker of any blessing at his Baptism, and as though "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments,"



or the whole sum of his religion, were not to be taught him in the vulgar tongue nakedly and independently of the free promises of his Baptism, but in connexion with them, as imparting a divine influence and power to enable him to comprehend and practice them, as taught in his Catechism, “and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.” Neither faith, nor prayer, nor practice are taught the child, as the Church directs in connection with the promise of grace in his Baptism; so that his Baptismal privileges being wholly unenforced in the way of encouragement; or on the great principle of the Gospel,—the promise of grace, the child is left both to believe the Creed, to offer prayer, and to practise the Law, simply in the power of his own fallen nature, or in unassisted legal obedience to the precept; and his Baptismal privileges, not being enforced either by Minister, Catechist, Parent, Sponsor, or the Church, they are utterly neglected, being buried in silence by all parties concerned; and the ceremoniously baptised with water, neither knows nor enjoys, nor is expected to enjoy any Baptismal privilege of promise, any spiritual advantage. And this error is in practice quite as detrimental to the Church as that of Dr. Pusey. It is *elementum non consecratio*; the mere water, and not the water consecrated into a mystery of grace—a Sacramental seal of the promise; and its issue in practice is utterly nothing. Thus Puseyism expects something out of nothing,

a result without a cause, a boon without the faculty to apply it; and, on the other hand, Modern Evangelism really expects no practical benefit to attend the baptised: the child, whatever advantage may accompany the Adult, not being actually taught by any of the Parties to avail himself of the grace of Baptism in the suppression of sin, or the attainment of holiness: he is not Baptismally educated as the Church directs, and the privileges of his Baptism become practically nothing.

And now what is the principle which gives birth to this practice in Modern Evangelism? But what may be called Modern Evangelism<sup>1</sup>? If it is to be allowed in all its indistinctness, admitting the term from its faintest appearance to its distinctest portraiture, I should suppose it might embrace the whole field of authors in our Church from the faintness of Burnet to the distinctness of Biddulph. I say the faintness of Burnet; for if we are to take the gage of his Evangelism from the tone of his condemned sermons preached before the dying Lord William Russell, when Evangelical sentiments would have been most appropriate and most needful; or from his

<sup>1</sup> The *characteristic* of Modern Evangelism, I conceive to be, the holding the first three developements of gracious privilege, as stated in the Seventeenth Article, but coming short of that assurance which is the essence of adoption, and the source of Evangelical sanctification. He who exceeds this grade, approaches the Evangelism of the Reformation in the degree in which he exceeds it towards perfection.

seven Essays towards a New Book of Homilies, or his Histories of the Reformation, or of his own times, or his Exposition of our Articles, and consider these as exhibitions of vital and spiritual Christianity, they are poor indeed : yet there is an honesty and integrity both in his sentiments and spirit which are truly Christian ; and show us with what indistinct apprehension of Christian principle real piety may consist ; and that the man who with Archbishop Tillotson and the leading Divines of our Church in his day, could arraign our Homilies of carrying “ Justification by faith only, to a height that wanted some mitigation,” could also say, “ by religion I mean *such a sense* of divine truth, as enters into a man, and becomes a *spring of a new nature* within him ; reforming his thoughts and designs, purifying his heart, and sanctifying him, and governing his whole deportment,” &c.<sup>1</sup> Of the man who considers religion as “ the spring of a new nature,” a matter of “ feeling,” “ the earnest of that supreme joy which he panted and longed for,” though he may hold the

<sup>1</sup> He adds, “ Of this I write with the more concern and emotion, because I have felt this the true and indeed the only joy, which runs through a man’s heart and life ; it is that which has been for many years my greatest support ; I rejoice daily in it ; I feel from it the earnest of that supreme joy, which I pant and long for ; I am sure there is nothing else can afford any true or complete happiness.” See Bishop Burnet’s honest and noble “ conclusion ” of his History of his own time.” Fol. Vol. II. pp. 668, 669.

principles of faith with much indistinctness and confusion in his head, yet we cannot but say of him, that “he has an unction from the Holy One” (1 John ii. 20.) in his heart. And this is Evangelical religion: primary, elementary, and meagre perhaps, not rich and deeply Evangelical; but Evangelical still.

I begin then with Bishop Burnet. He speaks of Baptism as held by our Church as follows—“The Office for baptizing Infants is in the same words with that for persons of riper age; because Infants being then in the power of their Parents, who are of age, are considered as in them, and as binding themselves by the vows that they make in their name. Therefore the Office carries on the *supposition* of an internal regeneration; and in that helpless state the Infant is offered up and dedicated to God: and provided that when he comes to age, he takes those vows on himself, and lives like a person so in covenant with God, then he shall find the full effects of Baptism; and if he dies in that state of incapacity, he being dedicated to God, is certainly accepted of by him; and by being put in the second Adam, all the bad effects of his having descended from the first Adam are quite taken away, &c.<sup>1</sup> I conceive that in this passage the Bishop at once lays down his principle of Baptismal interpretation and refutes it: the Infant being first *supposed* to be regenerated, and

<sup>1</sup> Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles. Art. 27.

lastly *assumed* to be so; and *assumption* thus superseding *supposition*, effectually refutes it. The Bishop first says, that “the office carries on the *supposition* of an internal regeneration;” that is, the office supposes the internal regeneration of the child; “and in that helpless state the Infant is offered up and dedicated to God:” and in the latter part of the sentence it is said; “and if he dies in that state of incapacity, he being dedicated to God, is certainly accepted of by him; and by being put in the second Adam, all the bad effects,” &c. If this second sentence had been consistent with the first, the Bishop should have written, and being *supposed* to be put in the second Adam; but he forsakes *supposition* and resorts to *assumption*; stating positively and *assuming* that the Infant was actually “put in the second Adam,” at his Baptism; “by being put,” actually “put in the second Adam” at his Baptism; for it is quite clear that if he had only been *supposed* to be “put,” the effects predicated could with no certainty have been expected; “all the bad effects of his having descended from the first Adam” could not justly be expected to have been taken away,” for how can we justly entertain such an expectation from the Infant’s *supposed* “regeneration.” No, it is on the assumption of his being actually regenerated, or actually “put in the second Adam,” at his Baptism that such effects can justly be expected: and in order to state this effect with any propriety, the Bishop is compelled to change *supposition* for

*assumption*, hypothesis for the assumed fact ; for it is not as *supposed* to be put in the second Adam, that “the bad effects” are said to be “taken away ;” but as assumed actually, through God’s promise, to be really “put in the second Adam,” that these “effects” are said to be removed. I conceive therefore, that the contradictory character of this very passage, which states this doctrine of *supposition*, does in fact refute the very doctrine which in terms it asserts ; and by resorting to the idea of *assumption* to explain its own meaning, in fact excludes the doctrine of *supposition*, and asserts that of *assumption*.

I conceive also that the above passage contains a mistake, which is not peculiar to the school of the Baptism of Infants by *supposition*. “The office of baptizing Infants is in the same words with that for persons of riper age ; because Infants being then in *the power of their Parents*, who are of age, are considered as in them, and as binding themselves,” &c. It may be very true in natural things that the Parent may covenant for the child ; but Baptism is not a natural but a spiritual thing ; and the right of the Parent to covenant for the child is a spiritual and not a natural right ; that spiritual right being grounded on the promise of God to him as a Believer : for the promise is the sole ground of every spiritual right : and it is not the natural “power of their Parents,” but their spiritual privilege, through the promise in which Christian Parents present their children to the



Church for the blessings of Baptism; *assuming* them to be within the covenant of the Gospel through faith in the promise; “for the promise is unto you and to your children,” &c. Acts ii. 39. The faithful Parent “being persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards” his “Infant,” *assumes* him to be within the covenant, and on this persuasion offers him to the Church for Baptism as the seal of the promise: a thing *assumed* to be true may be sealed, but who can seal a *supposition*?

The Authors also of a recent Publication entitled “Plain Tracts for Critical Times,” supported by a portion of the Periodical Press, assign this doctrine of *supposition* as the just interpretation of the Baptismal Service. But I conceive that no work founded on this principle, though it professes to be an answer to Dr. Pusey, and abounds, as the above work does, with many just remarks on Baptism, can ever be considered as a successful answer to his system. Supposition failing of assurance, fails in ascribing that virtue to the promise, which assures the Believer that he does not present his child at the font in vain: and without this assurance of faith, who will either expect or pray for subsequent blessings, or what practical effect will his Baptism be expected to have on the Infant, or on any of the parties concerned in his Baptism? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I must honestly own, that every attempt to answer Dr. Pusey, or the Author of any other errors on the subject of our



That venerable Father in God, the late excellent Mr. Biddulph of Bristol, a name justly revered in our Church, who frankly declared to the Author that he could not hold his sentiments on Baptism, thus expresses himself on the Collect for the third Sunday in Lent. “ Our Church *supposes* in the judgment of charity which “ believeth and hopeth all things ” to the utmost bound of rational probability, that those who join in her worship and use of her Collect are “ God’s humble Servants.” <sup>1</sup> If the Church *supposes* in one of our formularies, she *supposes* in all; for the same principle pervades all her formularies from the incipient Baptismal to her final Burial Service. But as I have shown, the Church is consistent on the ground of the promise to Believers and their children, in *assuming* in her first three formularies, during the childhood of her Catechumen, his actual regeneration as effected at his Baptism, which she teaches him up to his Confirmation; at which it is also *assumed*

Baptismal privileges as detailed in our Services, that does not proceed on the principle of free grace contained in the Seventeenth Article will be short, inconclusive, and unsatisfactory. Modern Evangelism, I conceive, just attains the half of the Article, and stops at the doctrine of assurance, expressed first by our adoption; and this Semi-Evangelism, not reaching the privilege of our Baptismal Service, is unable to answer Dr. Pusey or the author of any other Baptismal error, by substituting the whole truth, to the utter exclusion of all error. As the field fully cropped, leaves no room for weeds of any kind.

<sup>1</sup> See Essays on the Liturgy. Vol. II. p. 150.

by the Bishop in plain set terms,<sup>1</sup> and not merely *supposed*; and this same assumption proceeds with all becoming consistency, through all the subsequent Services which the child uses in the Church “till his life’s end.” The doctrine of assurance, not as merely abstract, but as specially applied to every Member of her Communion who partakes of any one of her Services, she consistently insists on from the beginning to the end. And how is it possible as a sound Church of Christ that she can insist on any other? She cannot as a worshipping Church be at once faithful and unfaithful, believing and unbelieving, and thus play fast and loose between both; but as consisting of a Congregation of professed faithful men, she must leave secret things to the Lord our God, and proceeding on the broad principle that men are what they profess to be, while she does her utmost to “take forth the precious from the vile,” Jer. xv. 19. she must consider her Congregation as “God’s humble Servants,” and on this assumption conduct her worship from her first formulary to the last. They must be “dearly beloved Brethren” in Christ, or they must be mere natural men; if they profess to be the former, they must be addressed and treated as such. It is on this charitable *assumption* that the Church proceeds;

<sup>1</sup> The Bishop prays, “Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins, *strengthen* them,” &c.

and with what consistency can she do otherwise? <sup>1</sup>

But how can assurance consist with *supposition*?

<sup>1</sup> If Baptismal Regeneration as illustrated by the Services of our Scriptural Church, had been understood by Modern Evangelists, the strong and beautiful text, Col. ii. 11, 12, would not have perplexed Modern Commentators and Preachers, as it is confessed to have done. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; (or by Christian circumcision, which is Baptism,) Buried with him in baptism; wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Which is thus commented on by the Rev. Thomas Scott.

"This conformity to the crucified and risen Saviour was effected, "through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead;" or, by a believing reliance on that effectual saving power of God, as displayed in the Resurrection of Christ. It is, no doubt, an important scriptural truth, that the faith by which we receive all other blessings, is itself the gift and work of God:—and this has induced *some expositors* and *very many preachers*, to explain the clause to mean "the faith which God has wrought in the heart." This was *the author's view when he wrote the first edition of this work*. But a careful examination of the subject has convinced him, that this is *rather imposing a sense on* the Apostle's words, than enquiring after the true meaning of them. The ablest Greek Scholars are decided that the idiom of the language will not admit of that construction: and certainly there is no instance in the New Testament, in which a similar mode of expression can fairly be thus interpreted."—See Scott's explanatory notes in loco.

If our Baptismal Service had been understood as above, I apprehend that this passage would have been easily under-

who can build certainty on hypothesis? the Church of England with all the Churches of the Reformation is founded on the doctrine of assurance; and that in the degree that faith exercises itself on the promise of a covenant God.

stood by Commentators and “Expositors and Preachers;” but for want of this understanding, the expression of Scripture has been inverted and deprived of its peculiar force, as Mr. Scott acknowledges, and attenuated into the ordinary idea, of faith’s being the operation of God in the soul. The plain meaning seems to be, being “buried with” Christ “in baptism,” in baptism “ye are also risen with him;” which rise has been effected, through your faith of the operation of the Spirit of God in your souls; which operation of the Spirit on your souls in baptism hath raised you from the death of sin, to a life of righteousness; even as God hath raised Christ from the dead: the very idea so strongly expressed by the same Apostle, Eph. i. 19, 20, or by our Church in her Baptismal Service, “that as he died and rose again for us,” &c.: “through the faith of the operation of God in our baptism, we also are risen with Christ, even as God hath raised him from the dead.” Your Baptism was not a dead form, but effectual “through your faith of the operation of God in your soul.”

This interpretation, is I conceive natural, simple, and appropriate; and is confirmed by the expositions of the Reformers: but it seems to have been mistaken in our day of Modern Evangelism, because the interpretation of the Baptismal Services of our time afforded scarcely any living illustration of its truth. Where did the interpretation find an illustration in practice? What child is benefited in his education, in our modern days, “through faith of the operation of God,” raising his soul from sin to holiness in Baptism, as he raised his Son from the dead? Who believes it so as to carry it into practice?

I am aware that *supposition* and *assumption* are sometimes used indifferently, and as synonymous terms; but on due reflection, they will be found to differ as what may be considered probable, does from what may be so far considered certain, as to be justly taken for granted. If God gives me a promise, to *suppose* only that it will be accomplished, is to wrong the faithfulness of God by not giving him that incumbency of faith which is due to his word. But to *assume* on the ground of his faithfulness, the performance of his promise as a fact that shall assuredly be performed, is “to judge him faithful who hath promised, Heb. xi. 11. to stagger not at the promise of God through unbelief.” Rom. iv. 20. to be “persuaded of it, and embrace it;” and “to endure as seeing him who is invisible.” Heb. xi. 13, 27: and this is solid faith.

The Church of England does not delude us by a supposition grounded on no warrant, nor does she ask us to give credit to a supposition, or any thing hypothetical; for that would but encourage a vain confidence; but on the firm ground of God’s promise to the Believing Parent and to his Church, she encourages us, “Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that he will likewise favourably receive this present Infant,” applying “God’s promises as they be *generally* set forth to us in holy Scripture,” *specially* to the spiritual benefit of the individual Infant, as the faith of the Parties is required to do. The same encourage-

ment is given after the Baptism of the child, to praise God “that it hath pleased him to regenerate *this Infant* with thy Holy Spirit;” here also *specially* applying the *general promise*. But how can *supposition* be any ground of certainty dispelling “doubt?” Or how can *supposition* afford just ground for praise to thank God for an actual fact, when we have only mere hypothesis for its warrant? No, the Church is not so unreasonable. On the contrary, she asks for our confidence on the warrant of the divine promise; she asks for our credit to the divine word; she encourages us to trust the divine fidelity by an incumbent faith: and on this warrant, to *assume* that all is true; and to confide and trust, and believe, and praise, and work, and educate accordingly; *assuming* that the baptised Infant is really within the covenant of mercy, and calling upon the Sponsors to “train him up” accordingly, “that this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life.”

And if such be the principle of Modern Evangelism as to the interpretation of our Service, giving no larger credit to the promise of God, than that which mere *supposition* admits; or as is to be feared, is too often the case, not adverting to the promise at all; and thus wholly excluding the great efficient canon of just interpretation at the end of the Seventeenth Article, it cannot be a subject of wonder, if the practice of this school is in just consistency with its principle. What is its efficacy in practice? literally nothing: as might in



reason be expected from mere supposition or hypothesis. The Minister on this principle does not instruct the Sponsors or the Parents to bring up the child in faith, on the divine warrant of the promise ; he does not instruct the Church to take any interest in the baptised child by its sympathies and prayers on the same warrant ; though he has just before in the Service called upon them not to doubt but to believe ; he does not instruct the Child as a Catechumen beyond the letter of the " Instruction " of his Catechism, telling him that the Church expects him to grow up " a Member of Christ," &c. as he was made at his Baptism, encouraging him as a child of grace, to pray to God in confidence of mercy, and to " thank his heavenly Father " indeed, " that he hath called him to this state of salvation," &c. And as the Minister teaches none of the Parties to expect any gracious effect from the Baptism, so the other Parties on this principle of supposition, consent to the supineness and silence of the Minister : the Parents do not pray for their child as a child of grace, but bring him up under the rigour and harshness of the Law, without deriving any aid from the sweet mercies of the Gospel, or inducing the child to realise the promise of a merciful God, by *specially* applying that mercy to himself, by " calling for the same at all times by diligent prayer." The Sponsors are never reminded that " it is your parts and duties to see that this Infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn,



what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he hath here made by you." In private and in public, they are not urged to pray for their charge, or to consider their office as any thing more than a dead letter without interest or concern. And as to the poor Infant, he grows up not the child of Christian sympathy, but of neglect and disregard : the letter of his Baptism is imprinted on his memory, and the name attaches to his person ; but as there is no faith in the Parties from the Minister to the Infant, so no effect is either expected or produced : and as the base of the system is *supposition*, so the superstructure is inefficiency and failure.

And do I unduly term this treatment of Christian Baptism as administered by our Scriptural Church the faithless disparagement of Modern Evangelism ?

But in fact our Baptismal Service is nothing more than the incipient instance of salvation by promise ; as is subsequently applied in all the Services of the Church ; and this necessarily involves the doctrine of assurance. Let the promise then to the Church and her children be applied by faith, and the Baptised Infant as within the covenant of grace, is educated accordingly. Based, not on the *supposition*, but *assumption* of his "state of salvation," the new member of the Church is accepted as such by the Communion of Saints, and is taught that his Baptism is a grand reality. He is the child of the Church ; and this

view of the Infant at once calls the energies of the Church into action respecting its training up, and sets bounds to the Congregation: for it is utterly impossible to maintain Baptismal sympathies when the Congregation by its numbers exceeds the regards of that Christian family in which the vital communion of the Saints consists. But once assume the fact of the child's "state of salvation" by promise as our Church does; and, not a fable or an unreal picture—but a solid and vital communion of Saints is presented in every Christian Congregation. Not the discipline of a mere canon, or law, whether of Parliament or Convocation would be required to preserve the order of such a Church; but the assumption of this one grand truth, the Baptismal Regeneration of the child, as the child of God's promise sealed by Baptism, both conveying and assuring the Church of the same, and calling on all the parties concerned to give their faith in this promise a vital efficacy by their prayers and practice, would necessarily create, and maintain the willing discipline of grace and love: then the Church would enjoy her privileges that she might maintain her graces. Her means of grace in *daily* worship and communion, must be observed to sustain the reality of her communion; and the theoretical beauty of our Established Church would be really illustrated in the experimental blessedness of each Congregation; till the whole Land was combined in one real harmony of grace. It is evidently nothing

short of this that our Established Church proposes in her establishment: let every Congregation be formed on this principle; let us trust God with the honour and efficacy of his own promise, and we need not fear the result. Happily this principle of our Church is in the course of practice in some of our Congregations; and in the degree in which it is carried into effect, so is the discipline of willing order in the course of establishment; so Christian sympathies are excited and maintained; and the Communion of Saints is felt and acknowledged to be spiritual blessing indeed. But I must not enlarge on the blessedness of this system, lest I anticipate the subject of the following volume.

But in fact, this doctrine of *supposition* and *hypothesis* seems to level our Church with Dissent; and to deprive her of that distinctive blessedness which is her peculiar privilege, and of which Dissenters would deprive her: and in dissenting from her on this subject of Baptismal Regeneration, it is a question whether they do not actually deprive themselves of the assured blessings of this Sacrament.

I can understand the Antipædobaptist in refusing to baptise Infants, because he sees no actual grace in them; and awaits the hour of conversion before he will give any credit to the reality of regeneration; which if God has given no promise to the children of the Church, he is fully justified in doing; but which if God *has* given, he is

equally culpable in doing, by withholding from them the seal of those blessings which the promise really confers on them; thus, as it appears to me, living by sight and sense instead of faith. And I can understand the Quaker or Friend, whose false views of spirituality deprive the Sacrament of its peculiar character of condescending pity, in applying spiritual blessing to our weak nature through the medium or means of sensible objects; and I can pity and pray for that proud attachment to sinful self which rejects that accommodating adaptation of spiritual blessing to the infirmity of our imperfect and earthly apprehensions through the means of objects of sense. And I bless God I can understand and accept with holy gratitude those views and Services of faith and love, which our blessed Church has prepared for us and our children, encouraging us to thank God for that very regeneration, which however imperceptible to sight and sense, is perceptible to faith as realising the promise of a faithful God, whose "grace" as she teaches me, in "the Sacraments, doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him." Art. XXV. In all these views of Baptism there is a distinctness which I can comprehend; but I frankly confess I do not comprehend the Baptism of Independent Dissenters. Does it rest on the promise, that it is to them and their children, or does it not? And in their view, is Baptism the seal of the promise, or is it not? Is any practical benefit expected

from it to the child, and is the child educated as a child of grace, and as within the covenant of mercy? And is he considered as an incipient “member of Christ,” &c. or is he not? Does his baptism go for nothing in his education? And, as I have heard it expressed, is the child “merely entered into a dispensation,” and something like our Baptismal Register, is he merely enrolled as one of the Church; and not considered as a member, till he is technically admitted as a member, as partaker of “The ordinance?” In a word, is “The ordinance” of the Lord’s Supper the great distinctive ordinance of Church-membership to the—not professed but real exclusion of the initiatory ordinance of Baptism? If the latter be really the case, I conceive that as this system virtually reduces Baptism to a nullity, it joins with Modern Evangelism in the degrading and nullifying disparagement of Baptismal privilege and blessing.

And is it not a little remarkable, that among other reasons for not *dissenting from the Church*, and becoming what they esteemed *Schismatics* and *Separatists*, the “eminent”<sup>1</sup> and “good old non-conformists” adhered to the Established Church in a great measure from this very apprehension, that “the breaking out of Independency in England,” and “the Brethren of the new separation” would in the issue only “sit down on this side

<sup>1</sup> See Clark’s “Lives of Two and Twenty English Divines, eminent,” &c. Title Page.

Anabaptism.”<sup>1</sup> In the life of Master John Ball, it is said, “His remembrance of the history of former separations—and his providential foresight of the deducts [or consequences] which would necessarily follow from their principles (viz. *Anabaptism*, &c.) together with his wise insight into the dispositions of some persons who then appeared therein; these were the grounds of his foretelling the confusions, the spreading of pernicious errors, and hindrances of Reformation which we since have sadly suffered under.”<sup>2</sup> So again, Master Richard Sedgwick “foresaw the ensuing distractions with a grieved heart—his judgment concerning some hath proved true, asserting often that their principles would not (if they continued in them) suffer them to sit down on this side *Anabaptism*.<sup>3</sup> The disparagement of Baptism even to Anabaptism, &c. they saw to be the necessary consequence of the principles of separation; and, oppressed as they were, by a cruel intolerance which threatened their starvation, they preferred submitting to every extremity, by adhering to the Established Church, rather than become Separatists and Independents, with the assurance that the necessary consequence of such dissent and Independency must be the disparagement of Baptism even to Anabaptism; and that instead of Independents, by secession promoting the Reform of the Church, they fore-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, pp. 508, 509.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 508.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp. 508, 509.



saw<sup>1</sup> “ that if God should give opportunity and hopes of Church-reformation, that we might be eased of our present grievances, the brethren of the new Separation would be found to be the greatest obstructors thereof.” How just these prophetic surmises were, our modern times most amply declare : the subversion, and not the reformation of the Established Church, being but too apparently the aim of many modern Dissenters ; and the Baptism of our Church being the subject of their professed disparagement and rejection.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 508.

<sup>2</sup> The Baptismal system of our Church as detailed in this preface, and in the following work, is called by a respectable Dissenter, an “ awful and monstrous fiction.” I am quite prepared for either that, or any yet more degrading appellation from a Dissenter, especially of modern days. This was not the sentiment of The Non-Conformists of the primitive days of our Reformed Church : so far were they from deeming it “ a monstrous fiction,” that they foretold most truly, into what “ awful and monstrous ” disparagement of Baptism, the Baptismal aberrations of modern Dissent would lead, even to Anabaptism itself. The low views of modern Evangelism, especially among many Dissenters, must necessarily hold our Baptismal Services as a fable and a fiction : and it would not only be unjust but absurd in me to expect the concurrence of any one in the Baptismal views of this volume, whose Christianity has not reached the high tone of that of the Reformers and Puritans—salvation by promise : of which our Baptismal Service is but the incipient instance, and all the following Services of the Church are but consistent illustrations. But I ask, is salvation by promise the ordinary tone of the Evangelical pulpit, whether in or out of the Church ? When it is, I am well convinced

Shall I state what may be considered the ordinary course of the Modern Evangelical Minister ? Bred up either in an Evangelical family, attached perhaps with hereditary affection to our Church, or connected with pious persons, or induced to serious religion by the persuasive volumes of Mrs. H. More, or the excellent Mr. Wilberforce, or authors of that kind and polished school, or attracted by the distinctive holiness of College associates, or the approved ministry of the Preacher, under whom he is either accustomed to sit, or whom in the providence of Him who adapts all due means to the proposed end, he has as it were accidentally heard, the adult Tyro addresses his views to the Church. With a mind expanded by the liberal education of College, and prejudiced in favour of the Established Church ; his desires directed to become generally useful, his views of life from his intercourse with the Collegiate circle really, though imperfectly preparing him for a more extended commerce with mankind, his measured acquirements in some degree qualifying his

that I shall be spared any further defence of the above system ; for it will be found, that as the persuasion of Baptismal Regeneration is practically carried out in the heart, the chamber, the nursery, the parlour, the parish, the pulpit, the Ministry, the Church, and the Bishop's Charge, so will a real practical invasion be made on the dense mass of our National heathenism ; so will a sound Church of England be gathered and maintained ; and so will a real discipline separate " him that serveth God " from him that " serveth him not." (Mal. iii. 18.)

vanity, under the conviction that in art, and science, and general literature, and especially in divinity there is much more to be acquired, he presents himself to the Bishop for ordination. He has been taught by the Spirit, that Evangelism is more than orthodoxy, that spirituality is more than sentiment, that Christianity is not a name, but a real vitality; not the work of man but of God in the human soul, and that there is a distinctness in genuine Christianity both in principle and practice, far beyond the indistinct legality of Nelson, or "The Whole duty of man," the ordinary grade of fashionable Churchmanship. He studies the common course of reading prescribed for candidates for ordination, and consults Burnet's accommodating Exposition of the Articles, with other modern expositions, on which he puts a spiritual sense, without minutely examining the consistency of the whole, or observing the exquisite beauty and harmony of the doctrines of grace maintained by our Church as condensed with consummate perfection in her Seventeenth Article; with the statement of which in a general sense he concurs. The Liturgy has been familiar to him from his childhood; and the Homilies share a certain portion of his regard: but neither the one nor the other are so studied in connection with Scripture and the Reformation, as to present these accredited productions—the great spiritual material of our Church, as a whole; the complete consistency of which is its beauty and perfection. Hence

without any distinct view of the divine life as a growing process of sanctification, as it is a developement of the love of God to his soul in Christ before the world was, he commences his Ministerial course. Unconscious that he has only attained the first grades of "the life of God in the soul of man," he hesitates to admit that to be true, which he does not experience. He has already arrived at the first three privileges described by the Article; he is effectually "called by the Spirit working in due season;" and he evidences the efficacy of his call, by the reality of his conversion, for he "through grace obeys the calling;" and his views are sufficiently clear to perceive the nature of free justification; and to accept it as the great turning point of vital Christianity. But though his sermons are composed by the square of this doctrine; yet he is but little aware of the excellency of the privileges into which the spiritual enjoyment of free justification by the blood of Jesus admits him. He holds it therefore rather as a principle of divine truth, than as the very essence of that truth wrought out in his affections with experimental efficacy, enlightening his mind with the rich brilliancy of Gospel grace, and purifying his heart to serve with the willing energies of love. Graces and duties are the subject of his sermons; but rarely, if ever, does he touch upon privileges; much less does he animate his people to exercise graces, and to discharge duties in the strength of privileges. He under-

stands and admits, and preaches the Apostle's deduction from his statement in the first four chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, "Therefore being justified by faith;" but he neither sees nor feels the blessed consequences of it, to which as justified by a living faith, both himself and his flock are entitled—the sweet assurance of their individual reconciliation to God, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus he has, without being conscious that they are but a partial developement of God's mercy to his soul, attained the first three gradations of the doctrines of grace; but the last of them, that of free justification, so dimly and imperfectly, that neither in his experience, nor in his ministry, can he rise much above the Nelson school of modern divinity, that the Gospel is something dependent on prerequisite conditions in man, rather than a gradual exposition and application of free mercy to the heart of a forgiven sinner, as he is gradually strengthened by grace to apply this mercy to his own individual personal benefit. Hence for years perhaps, he stops at this point, prejudiced probably against further views of Gospel privilege, and deeming the four remaining grades of spiritual improvement, if not wholly an unknown Land, yet so little known, and so imperfectly revealed, that further progress is rather a question of controversy than of practice, and that he is safest where he is. Hence seeing no further necessary connection between our justification and our sanctification,

than that the latter is the evidence of the former, he never proceeds to that doctrine of *assurance* which elevates him to the rich privilege of adoption; and makes his sanctification not merely a duty but a privilege, the effect not of human strength, but of free grace; he is ever therefore insisting on sanctification, rather as the effect of a legal rule, than as a privilege derived from our free adoption into the rich covenant of redeeming love.

Now our Reformers with singular wisdom, beauty, and efficacy, as the Scripture does, have connected our sanctification with the “peace” or sense of adoption, which springs out of our faith in our personal and individual application of the blood of Christ to our special forgiveness of sins. Hence “being justified by faith we have peace,” Rom. v. 1. or adoption, which is their fourth gradation in the developement of the divine life of God’s elect. Being “justified freely, they be made Sons of God by adoption.” This is the grand turning point in the life of the Saint when holiness becomes happiness. Till he feels the Spirit of adoption, he is under the Spirit of bondage. Rom. viii. 15; all his life is past under the slavery of the Law; still it is under the Spirit as a Spirit of bondage generating fear, apprehension, and alarm; and fear hath torment; so that his seasons of divine freedom and pleasure are but few; and they are rather exceptions to, than the character of his religious course. Alas! his prejudices and his unbelief are “forsaking his own mercies;” he does not



see that the Spirit has brought him into this depression of legal fear, that he may be elevated “into the glorious liberty of the children of God,” (Rom. viii. 21,) and may enjoy “the Spirit of adoption, whereby he cries, Abba, Father ;” Rom. viii. 15. and prayer, and duty, and holiness, in all its diversified perfection may be his highest aim as they constitute his consummate happiness. But let him once attain the blessed privilege of this fourth gradation of grace, and now, not so much the legal rule—(this he loves, and venerates, and pants after the attainment of,) but that rule as exemplified and exquisitely pictured to his faith in the divine word, as the imitable model of all perfection, in the character of the all-perfect Immanuel, becomes the object of his desires and attainments. His sanctification now springs out of the sense and enjoyment of the freedom of his adoption; this is the fifth privilege therefore, into which the Article introduces him: “they be” first “made Sons of God by adoption,” and next in this blessed *ποίημα* or divine workmanship, Eph. ii. 10. “they be made after the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ.” Here is the perfect model of his sanctification, after which the Spirit with his plastic hand is now moulding him, and this is the great end for which the Saints were originally predestinated. “For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.” Rom. viii. 29. Conformity to the

perfect "image of his Son," is the true and genuine sanctification of his Church. The whole Church are his brethren, and blessed be God, Christ has MANY brethren. Christ is the first-born of the Church; the model of all its holiness; and our sanctification is the resemblance of his own perfection; both his work, his own fashioning, and the imitation of his fashion. And as faith sees more and more of the perfection of Christ, so the soul pants after his all-perfect loveliness; and never rests, till, as its consummate blessedness, it attains to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Eph. iv. 13.

The soul now arrives at the sixth grade of the developement of grace as described by the Article; "they walk religiously in good works." The man's life is now a *religious* life, abounding "in good works:" holy thoughts, holy words, holy works, are his aim and his delight; like his Saviour "he goes about doing good." Acts x. 38. Duties, graces, privileges, are performed, exercised, and enjoyed by him as a child of God adopted as an heir of glory; and he daily goes on to perfection, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1. till the final developement of mercy unfolds its gates of glory to complete his blessedness, "and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity."

Such is the Saint proposed by our Scriptural Church; the full-proof child of grace, formed by the Spirit, and saved by mercy from his Baptismal

introduction into our Church, throughout all its formularies to his final committal to the earth as an heir of glory : and of this character are those “ godly persons ” to whom “ the godly consideration of Predestination and our Election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort.”

And such is salvation by promise, designed in the everlasting counsels of sovereign love, and expanding itself in all the consecutive privileges of grace on earth in the Believer’s accomplished experience, as he actually “ feels within ” himself “ the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and his earthly members, and drawing up his mind to high and heavenly things.” And he is assured that his consideration of his own election is truly godly, and abundant in the genuine “ comfort of the Spirit,” from the blessed effects it produces in his life ; “ because it doth greatly establish and confirm his faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle his love towards God ; ” and if it confirms his faith, and kindles his love, it cannot be counterfeit, it must be genuine ; for the fruits of adoption justify the Spirit of adoption. And he has thus the best evidence that he is a sound receiver of salvation by grace, for he has “ received God’s promises in such wise, as they be *generally* set forth to us in holy Scripture,” *especially* applying them to himself by a living faith, testified by a practice, ruled in all attainable obedience to the divine word ; for “ in his

doings, that will of God is followed, which he has expressly declared unto him in the word of God.”  
Art. XVII.

Here is the *thorough* Saint of our Established Church, the complete Evangelist, I conceive, as pourtrayed in all his gracious privileges by the Article, and whose holy progress is with corresponding beauty and conformity delineated in all the holy worship of our Liturgy, as wrought out in each following formulary from the Baptismal to the Burial Service. Only begin at Baptism with the child of grace, and you gradually accomplish him as the child of glory.

But is Modern Evangelism this? Does Modern Evangelism attempt this? Does Modern Evangelism conceive or comprehend this? Does it thus prepare its Saint as “meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light?” Col. i. 12. Are such his qualifications? Is he thus formed? Is his life a life of mercy, evidenced by those gradual developements of transforming grace, which are preparing his soul for glory, under the daily discipline of earthly sorrow and joy? And yet this is the Christianity of the Reformation: this is the Christianity of the Articles and Liturgy of our Reformed Church; and upon the incontrovertible authority of spiritual experience, we may say, this is the Christianity of the Bible.

If the above be a just description of Modern Evangelism, as contrasted with that of our Reformed Church, it is important to remark, that it

stops in the divine life, just at that point, where the Gospel applies itself in its true and genuine character, as the Gospel of free grace; it stops just where the Gospel becomes privilege in the experience of the Saint; and the doctrine of assurance secures to the individual Believer his own special share of salvation in “the glorious liberty” of his adoption. “O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant and the Son of thine handmaid, thou hast loosed my bonds.” Ps. cxvi. 16. “My Beloved is mine, and I am his.” Cant. ii. 16. “My Father thou art the guide of my youth.” Jer. iii. 4. This is the very point of application, where the *general* promise becomes *special*; and the bread of life offered to us, is applied effectually to the benefit and comfort of the individual Believer. He “has *now received* the atonement,” (Rom. v. 11.) or reconciliation; he has “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” and “the Spirit bears witness with his Spirit that he is a child of God.” Rom. viii. 11. And it is here that the Spirit experimentally seals his vital interest in salvation, and assures him, that he is indeed “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor” through hope. And it is in the attainment of this doctrine of assurance that the Modern Evangelist eminently fails: to speak honestly, does he not look at it with a spirit bordering on suspicion, rather than consider it as his duty to stir up both himself, and if he be a Minister, his people, to this “ripeness and perfectness

of age in Christ?" The free promise and assurance of salvation, mutually act and re-act on each other: as faith realises the promise, so is assurance confirmed in the soul, and as assurance is confirmed, so does faith attain clearer and surer views of the promise; and as we live on the promise, so do all the formularies of our Church, from the Baptismal to the Burial, become intelligible, suitable, and enjoyable.

And this seems to me to disclose the secret, which the wise and pious Non-Conformists well understood, when they anticipated the mischief of "Anabaptism," as the probable result of "the breaking out of Independency in England," and the rising up of "the Brethren of the new Separation." They saw that separation or Dissent from the National or General Church of Christ in the Land, as professed by the mass of the subjects of the realm, and equally professed and upheld by the State, must issue, as they "foretold," in "the confusions, the spreading of pernicious errors, and hindrances of reformation;" and that the grand mischief of "Anabaptism" must be the master-error which would both introduce, and confirm every other error, confusion, and hindrance to sound Church reform. And what is it but separation and Dissent that has broken up our Congregations, invaded our admirable Parochial arrangement, reduced our Baptismal privileges to a mere nullity in our esteem, and covered our initiatory Sacrament with contempt?



How long has Baptism, as the introductory privilege of the nascent Believer, and the child of the Church, been waning and sinking in popular esteem? Precisely from the date of "the rise of Independency in England," and of "the Brethren of the new Separation." What the Non-Conformists dreaded, would "eat as a gangrene," and which therefore was the means of preventing their Dissent, and caused them to submit not only to privation and want, but to a silent ministry, and a "famine of the word," has actually verified their forebodings, and well nigh ruined our Church, by depraving and disparaging its privileges of Baptismal Regeneration. Dissent has broken up our Congregations, and dissipated the beautiful order of our Church. And the idea of restoring Ecclesiastical harmony and efficiency, by uniting with Dissenters in collecting general Congregations, and sending out Ministers of all orders, or no orders, to preach and pray in our dense populations, I own appears to me to worse confound confusion, to attempt to restore order by the very means which can alone multiply disorder; and is that from which the Non-Conformists would have shrunk with dismay, as affixing a "gangrene" on the Church to prey on the vitals of its peace.

And here, from the general ignorance of Baptismal blessedness, which so fatally prevails at this day in our Church, how little are the evils of Dissent really appreciated. The Non-Conformists well knew, and duly appreciated its main evil, in

breaking up the Baptismal virtue and energy on which our Congregations are built, as the faith of the Church founded its existence and increase on the promise. It was "Anabaptism," and the disparagement of Infant Baptism, so as to account it nothing, and thus necessarily to elevate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the introductory Sacrament of Church Membership, to the exclusion of that of Baptism, in which they saw the principal mischief to consist. And how just their anticipation! For it is "the ordinance," and what is that? not the ordinance of Baptism, or the ordinance of Baptism in common with the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, but "the ordinance" of the Lord's Supper in admission to which Church-membership consists, according to the order of those who dissent from the Church: their ordinance being in effect an "Anabaptism," or baptising again, and *renewing* the admission of the Member into the Church, which is in effect "Anabaptism;" the real Church-membership of the Dissenter not being in his childhood at his Baptism, so that as in our Church, he is then on his first admission "made a member of Christ," &c. but his membership actually commences on his second admission as a recognised "member;" the second Sacrament having engrossed the virtue and purpose of the first. The Non-conformists judged right therefore; and we who come after in this our day, are deeply obliged to them for their wise discrimination, and the holy fortitude and

blessed forbearance, which, under God, asserted it, when they refused to become Dissenters, under the apprehension of becoming Anabaptists also; for what is the Church-membership of Dissent, but virtual Anabaptism, a second admission into the communion of the Church?

It is this prominent and characteristic evil of Dissent, its practical Anabaptism, so evident, and a subject of such just apprehension to Non-Conformists of old, of which modern Churchmen, whether Orthodox or Evangelical, seem altogether unconscious. The mischievous confusion introduced into our Parochial order by Dissent, is evident to all, but the characteristic *cause*, in the invasion of those Baptismal privileges of the Established Church, which constitute its nascent communion, in admitting the children of the Church to the right of being considered Believers, to which they have an indispensable claim on the ground of promise, but few indeed seem to be aware of.

But here let us be honest; and though we may not justify the Dissenter, at least attempt to account for his dissent. And is there not a cause? Have we not as Churchmen by our real dissent from our own Articles within the Church, afforded but too ample occasion for his dissent from it? I am accounting for Dissent, and not apologizing for it; for though we have given occasion by our faults within the Church, our faults afford no apology for their impatience, who unlike the primitive Non-Conformists, can neither pity, bear,

nor forbear; nor calmly prefer the best interests of the Church of Christ, to hasty departure, and unadvised schism from its ministration or communion. Impatience drives men to that intolerant decision, which will not pause to consider the difference between particular and general consequences; or to reflect, that, if the abuse of things constituted is the just ground of disunion and schism, not a family in Christendom, much more a Church, consisting of many families, could be held together for twenty-four hours. But while the unphilosophical and un-Christ-like conduct of the Dissenter, ("there being no schism or separation," as the Non-Conformist declares, "made by our Lord from the assemblies then *established*,") in separating from the Established Church, appears to me to be indefensible, as introducing a principle of interminable confusion into the Church; (for where is undefined Dissent to end, either in vagueness and wildness of doctrine, or reckless exorbitancy of practice;) let not the occasion be forgotten that has produced the overwhelming opposition of prevailing Dissent.

It must therefore be ingenuously confessed, that Dissent has really existed within the Church, as it has without it; and that this Dissent within the Church, has been the occasion of that which so largely prevails without it. Ecclesiastical History but too plainly shows us, that from the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, the successive representatives of the Church of England have

been departing both from the letter and spirit of those Articles which have professed to exhibit her Creed. It is not a little remarkable, that so far as the Author has been able to discover, no *literal* exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles has ever yet been presented to the Church.<sup>1</sup> Neither Dr. Pusey, nor his adherents, I presume, who have proposed sundry Authors to our notice, from Bishop Andrews who lived in the opening of the seventeenth century, when the purity of doctrine according to the Articles of our Church was rapidly declining; to Bishop Wilson, who lived towards the midst of the eighteenth century, when the doctrine of the Church had wholly declined into modern naturalism of sentiment, according to the divinity of Nelson and “The Whole duty of Man,” which has fashionably ascribed spiritual power to human effort, for the most part from the days of the Restoration, will assert that this list of Authors, so various in sentiment, exhibits the pure divinity of the Reformation as defined in the Articles of our Church.<sup>2</sup> Let them be read

<sup>1</sup> The want of this has induced the Author to attempt a literal exposition of our Articles: and to publish it as the eleventh number of his “Tracts for the Young,” intended to illustrate the Baptismal education of our Church.

<sup>2</sup> As Dr. Pusey and his friends propose the Authors in number fifty-seven, as constituting a “Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology,” of “the doctrines and discipline of the Anglican branch of the Catholic and Apostolic Church,” thus deliberately repudiating the Reformers by superseding their works, and substituting those of Divines of the two

with intelligence and impartiality, with honest comparison with the authorised formularies of our Church, or the authentic remains of the Reformers who composed them, and it will appear, that with the exception of a very few of the number recom-

following centuries ; it is but just that they should be at the trouble of forming out of the farrago of different sentiment good, bad, and indifferent contained in them, Articles of faith to define, Homilies of discussion to describe, and a Liturgy of worship to condense and illustrate the spirit of the divinity they recommend. And when they have worked up all this stubborn incongruity of truth and error into something like an orderly arrangement, they will find that they have presented to the Church a mass of unintelligible inconsistency. And this collection of discrepant Authors as representing the doctrines of the Anglican Church, I conceive, to be a just representative of Dr. Pusey's divinity : of which his book on Baptism appears to me to afford a fair instance : it being, I must honestly confess, a work abounding in more contradictions, errors, and inconsistencies, than I recollect ever to have read in a given space. And is Dr. Pusey really serious in proposing these fifty-seven contradictory Authors of the second and third centuries of our Reformed Church, as " maintaining and inculcating the doctrines of the Anglican " Reformation, as contained in those Articles, Homilies and Liturgy which he has subscribed as one of the Ministers of our Church. Can he, as an honest man, assert that these Authors are consistent with each other, or with the doctrines of the Reformation ? If not, what does he mean by the assertion made in the above title ? Let Dr. Pusey be consistent ; let him either recommend Authors who support the doctrines he has subscribed, or let him quit the Reformed Anglican Church, and honestly avow himself a Dissenter.



mended, they exhibit doctrines and sentiments at decided variance with those of the Reformers. To the above numerous list of Authors recommended by Dr. Pusey and his School, as "maintaining and inculcating the doctrines and discipline of the Anglican Branch of the Catholic and Apostolic Church," we may add others unmentioned in the above list, Tillotson, Burnet, and others who bore sway in our Church at the latter part of the seventeenth century, and who openly professed their dissent from the main doctrine of our Articles, and wished to see "the height" to which the doctrine of justification was carried by them, "mitigated;" and actually began a new book of Homilies, how different from those provided by the Reformers, let those who have compared Bishop Burnet's Seven Essays of those Homilies, which Archbishop Tillotson approved of, decide.<sup>1</sup> The dissent recommended by the above Tillotson

<sup>1</sup> We might add to the above instance the wish expressed as to the Athanasian Creed, "I wish we were well rid of it;" and other well-known projects of alteration of that period, the produce of discontent with things constituted. But as our Established Church in common with all the Churches of the Reformation hangs on this one peg, "Justification by faith only," as the staple security of her truth; I rather prefer adducing the above instance of their Dissent, as that by which, if they could have effected their design, they would have degraded our Church from her high station of "that pure and Reformed part of" the Church of Christ, which by the special mercy of God has so long been the rich honour, and characteristic blessing of our Country.

School from this great doctrine of our Church, seems to have characterised the divinity of the following century and a half, even to this day. The Book of Homilies had almost sunk into oblivion, till in the year 1812, it was called into notice again by the Prayer Book and Homily Society; and the Articles being very sparingly alluded to by Divines of our Church, till Modern Evangelism by its constant appeals in self-justification forced them into public attention, the fashionable tracts and publications recommended by the most influential agency of the Church, circulated Tillotson's and Nelson's divinity during that long season, and still continue to do so to the present hour. The tenets of this School dissenting from the great characteristic doctrine of our Reformed Church have long become the fashionable Orthodoxy of our day, and may fairly be stated as the Creed of the Modern Church of England; not the Articles of our Reformed Church, but Nelson's "Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England," and "The Whole Duty of Man," being the standards of doctrine to Orthodox Churchmen in this day of lapsed Reformation. And to this practical dissent from the Articles and Liturgy of that Primitive Protestant Church which we subscribe, and profess to believe, does Modern Evangelism add its counterpoising correction? Let the numerous pamphlets written during the three years of Reforming discussion from 1834 to

1836 by Modern Evangelists declare. Whatever variety of alteration, omission, or addition was proposed by their Authors,<sup>1</sup> or however they might differ from each other, in one thing they almost all agreed;<sup>2</sup> in omitting the doctrine of assurance from the Baptismal and Burial Services of our Church; and thus depriving the Reformed Church of England of her characteristic privilege as one of the Churches of the Reformation, and in fact dethroning her from her high and distinguished eminency, not only as the

<sup>1</sup> See the "Christian Observer" during those years, for a very large variety of sentiment as to Church Reform, with the Editor's opinion of the same.

<sup>2</sup> Trifles as truly show the bearings of the mind, as things of greater importance. The late venerable Mr. Simeon, in his collection of Hymns intended to accompany the Service in his Church, has inserted Cowper's beautiful hymn, "There is a fountain fill'd with blood," &c. from which he has endeavoured wholly to banish the doctrine of *assurance*, by lowering, "And there have I, as vile as he, washed all my sins away;" into "O may I there, though vile as he, wash," &c. and the two last exquisitely beautiful verses, expressive of *assurance*, are wholly excluded, and this lowering process is not uncommon in other modern collections. What would become of the Services of our Church, could they be submitted to the same Procrustean process? Surely hymns, intended to accompany the Services, should be accommodated to them, and not to the corrective *animus* of the Collector. How different the sentiments of our great hymn-writer of old! To banish *assurance* in his view, is to "unlock the door to cold despair, and gnawing pensiveness, "Oh, spiteful, bitter thought, bitterly spiteful thought,"—*George Herbert, Rector of Bemerton.*

Eldest Daughter of the Reformation, but as a Church of the Reformation at all: for the doctrine of assurance necessarily pervades and animates all her formularies; it is the very soul of her Articles; and the worshipper in our Church, who has not found it to be the soul that gives and maintains spiritual life in all the Services of our Liturgy, has never yet been admitted into the rich experience of spiritual enjoyment, which the plain expressions of those Services are intended to convey to the faith of the worshipper. Often has the Author felt disposed to express his thankfulness to God, that with so much practical dissent, and such various determination to alter the Services, it pleased God to afford no opportunity for the display of this prurient and dissenting spirit of change by the grant of a Convocation. No man can calculate the extent of the mischief which might have resulted from such an assembly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been said, "To what greater evils would a Convocation be subject, than those which necessarily accompany any other Assembly convened to discuss and to decide?" I speak above, from what I apprehend to be the probable state of things; and from our present vague religious principles within the Established Church, what reasonable man could expect that the same Articles, the same Services of the Liturgy, and the same Homilies would be provided for the Church as were by the Convocation of 1562; or the same Catechism as that of Dean Nowell, by the Convocation of a later date? Doubtless it is the prerogative of God to bring forth truth and rectitude in his own way; and to overrule the most apparently discordant materials to the production of good, and it is ours to live by faith and not by sight.

Viewed in its most favourable light, what could the Man of the Reformation have anticipated but innovation and deterioration, if not positive heresy and corruption of doctrine? He wants nothing changed that was constituted in the days of the Reformation. Expressions and Services since introduced, he may wish to see corrected, modified, or omitted: but the Constitution of the Church, in the provision of those Services which are to carry out into practical effect her great principle—salvation by promise, from her youngest Infant to her most matured Adult; of this sacred edifice, the depository of and security for all her blessings, he would not have one iota touched; since he is well convinced that the experience of past blessings, as testified by the united voice of Puritan and Conformist in the best days of our Church, convicts modern attempts at improvement of ignorance, and sciolism, and presumption. Who shall say that such a Convocation might not have enabled the Liberal in our Church to have reduced her high-toned spirituality of the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Spirit, to the frigid negation of Arianism or Socinianism? The Puseyite to insist on form for essence, ceremony for spirituality, sense for faith, the Sacrament of sealing and conveyance, for the privilege of promise, i. e. the mere externals of Popery for the essence of sound Protestantism? The Orthodox, to sink the very letter of the Article to the degraded moral level

of the Modern Church? or the Modern Evangelist to deprive at least two of the Services of their spirit of assurance, and to have rendered them inconsistent with the remaining formularies of our Church? Or perhaps we might have been indebted to the very errors of ceremonious Orthodoxy and Puseyism for the preservation of the letter of our Services, against the mistaken encroachments of Modern Evangelism. Surely, if such for the most part, has long been, and still is the manifold Dissent from the primitive Protestantism of our Reformation within the Church, we cannot justly be surprised at the manifold Dissent without it. Both within and without the Church, it is but too apparent, that Dissent abundantly prevails, both against the letter and doctrine of her authorised standards—the Articles, Homilies, Liturgy, and Catechisms of her Primitive Reformed Institution: and this common Dissent from Reformed and Scriptural truth is preparing both Churchman and Anti-Churchman, first for the exterminating grasp of Popery, and eventually for the still more exterminating corruption of undistinguishing Liberalism and Infidelity, which shall uncharacterise all Dissent, and bury all in one indiscriminate confusion. Seas and oceans existed before the flood; but the universal deluge indiscriminated them all.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Let the Student of prophecy reflect, whether historic fact justifies him in the conclusion, that the “Two witnesses” have yet been “killed;” and if not, whether Popery may



May God grant us Churchmen grace, to return to the plain truths of our Reformed Church, and thus when he sees us true to ourselves, to undissent ourselves, we may then hope by means of the same grace, to mitigate the prejudices, to correct the mistakes, and to allay the opposition of the Dissenter.

Dissent being thus but too evidently accounted for, we may now ask, Why is Modern Evangelism unaware of this mischief—the disparagement of Infant Baptism by Dissent, of which the Evangelists of the Reformation, whether Puritan or Conformist were apprehensive? I should answer, because Modern Evangelists have just attained that grade of doctrine, the three first degrees of spiritual developement expressed in the Seventeenth Article, which just enables them to discover the difficulties of the question of Infant Baptism, as stated in the formularies of our Church, as the Dissenters do, without having made that further progress in the attainment of those more advanced privileges stated by the Article, which solve the whole difficulty, by faith applying the *general* promises of the Gospel to the *special* not first be permitted to swallow up every other profession of Christianity, till she herself is swallowed up by Infidelity ; so that neither Christian name, nor ministry, nor church, nor Bible, nor life, shall be apparent, but the body of Christ—his Church, shall be so apparently dead, that its enemies shall rejoice over it, as utterly extinguished and abolished. Happily the depth of its fall shall but add to the glory of its revival.

benefit of every child admitted by Baptism into the Church; and on the ground of this promise, that faith consistently acting it out in the future education of the child, according to the following Catechism and Confirmation Services, and so throughout all the subsequent formularies of our Church. It commonly happens, that when the mind opens to Evangelical and spiritual religion, especially in that of a Minister of our Church, not many months of new impression pass over his head, before he is staggered at our Services for Infant Baptism; and not considering that he is yet a Tyro in divinity, and that he has not yet attained more than two or three grades in the School of Christ, and too impatient to wait till the Holy Spirit, in due process, leads him on to the higher grades of adoption<sup>1</sup> and assurance; he

<sup>1</sup> I am not aware that from my earliest youth to this hour, I have ever heard from a pulpit in our Church, a sermon on the subject of *adoption*; or on sanctification as connected with and springing out of our adoption—The Gospel statement of sanctification, as presented to us by our Reformers in the Seventeenth Article, and wrought out in the Scriptural Liturgy of our Established worship. The sanctification of the Church in its daily renewal by the Holy Spirit, is throughout every Service of the Liturgy, connected with our assumed regeneration and adoption, as in the Collect for Christmas-day; “Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed,” &c. Sanctification is the daily renewal of the regenerated and adopted soul by the Holy Spirit, and is at once its evidence and its confirmation. There are Archbishop Usher’s two masterly sermons on adoption, and Simon

hastily arrives at a conclusion, and prematurely settles down in the regions of Dissent; not actually becoming a Dissenter, but holding Dissenting principles on the subject of Infant Baptism, and joining a large portion of his Evangelical Brethren in desiring to get rid of all the expressions of assurance, which are so offensive to him both in the Baptismal and Burial Services. He looks at them not in the beautiful order of privileged connexion, as intended by the Reformers; but as detached formularies, and does not see that if the expressions of assurance are to be qualified in these two formularies, all the intermediate must, in consistency, submit to the same deteriorating process of unbelief, till the Church is degraded from a Communion of Saints, to a community of mere natural men. Modern Evangelists, having just attained the Evangelism of Dissent on this subject of Infant Baptism, are prepared to join Dissenters in Church Communion; and for this plain reason, because they have reduced Infant Baptism to the same degree of disparagement that Dissenters have done.

Such has long appeared to me to be the fact, Ford's elaborate volume on that subject; but since their day, where are we to look for either the statement or experience of the doctrine of adoption in our Church? And this consistent omission of one of the chief privileges of the Believer, at once accounts for all the legal Sanctification of the Nelson and Tillotson School, and the pre-requisite conditions, insisted on by the Modern Church of England, and reproves them.

and for the welfare of that Church which I love, I dare not but disclose my conviction, that false views of Baptismal Regeneration are now ruining our Church. The Orthodox and the Puseyite place its virtue in a ceremony, the mere *opus operatum*, and are deluded by a baseless assumption; and the Modern Evangelist gives no practical faith to the promise, and disparages the efficacy of Infant Baptism by not applying the promise in the education of the child, as a child of grace, and by degrading the Service to a mere hypothesis or supposition, which of course can produce no issue.

And what is the remedy? an ascent to the Evangelism of the Reformation as exhibited in the integral Liturgy of our Church. Not to tread back the three gradations already attained by Modern Evangelism, (for Modern Evangelism is genuine Christianity as far as it goes,) but to improve present possession to still higher attainment; to *proceed* into the regions of JUSTIFIED PEACE, the sweet regions of adoption and assured sanctification, and all the rich integrity of that religious walk, which distinguishes the soul formed after the lovely portraiture of the Seventeenth Article of our Church; a walk which infuses the genuine spirit of faith, and love, and holiness into every portion of our Liturgy, and fills *all* its blessed letter 'full of life, and spirit, and peace, and joy, and privilege. Dissenters applaud themselves for the freedom of their profession and their

worship: I believe, that it is not convenient for them to have either Articles or Liturgy: if they had, the definitions of the one, and the expressed worship of the other, must declare, what they mean by a Church, and who are the members that constitute it. God Almighty be praised for his distinguishing mercy in giving us both Articles and a Liturgy: the Non-conformists of old were not ignorant of these blessings. Alas! millions commend them, at this day, it is to be feared, who know not their value: thousands of Modern Evangelists give them their qualified praise; for it is but too evident that their praise is but qualified from the desire they express to alter the spirit of their letter. Nor ever can the due value of our authorised formularies be estimated, till we arrive at the genuine doctrines of the Reformation; till we value their privilege and *feel* their power.

I cannot but consider it as one great error in Modern Evangelism, that it identifies the Christianity of our Church, with the Christianity of Dissent. The Christianity of our Church, according to the tone as expressed by her letter, in her Homilies, Articles, and Liturgy, is the Christianity of the Church of Christ, as expressed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Salvation by promise, as illustrative of free grace, and sovereign mercy from beginning to end, as so exquisitely portrayed in the Seventeenth Article of our Church; ascribing all the honour of our salvation to God, and all the benefit to man. This is

the Christianity of the letter of our Church ; and this is the Christianity of the Churches of the Reformation also, according to the letter of their respective Confessions. But what is the Christianity of Dissent? Who knows, or who has the means of knowing? Where are its Homilies of description? Its Articles of definition? Or its Liturgy of experimental godliness, the living essence of its Homiletical and Articled truths, in the prayers of the Church? To what eye are they submitted? To none : for, according to the principles of Dissent, they cannot be submitted to human eye; neither can they be submitted to human ear, except to those of the hearers of each respective Congregation. Dissent has no accredited form, no authorised Creed. Shall its principles be sought then in the works of eminent Dissenters? Of the amiable and ‘ excellent Doddridge,’ the spiritual Henry, or the accurate Owen? Differing as they do from each other in style and statement, no impartial man, I conceive, who has read the authorised formularies of our Reformed Church, will admit that all or either of them attained the rich and Scriptural exhibitions of grace and godliness afforded by our Church. In which of them shall we find the delineation of truth and privilege condensed as in our Seventeenth Article?<sup>1</sup> And what Liturgical form or

<sup>1</sup> Booth’s “Reign of Grace,” bears the strongest resemblance to it of any work written by a Dissenter, with which I am acquainted.



spirit presents to our perception or experience the savoury worship of our Liturgy, or the special privileges of our Baptismal Service, which embodies the characteristic principle of grace—salvation by promise, for the everlasting supply of the Church, and the everlasting blessedness of the Believer and his children? Never, surely, can it with justice be said, that the Christianity of our Reformed Church, and the Christianity of Dissent are one, till we have manifested to our eye, such a statement of Scriptural truth as is exhibited in the Seventeenth Article of our Church, or such a provision of spiritual worship from the admission of the Infant into the Congregation by Baptism, to his maturing for glory as our Church contains. And as to the privileges of Dissent, it may well be doubted, whether Dissenters *can* ever enjoy these rich privileges of grace, or whether they are within their attainment, “till they find that when all is done,” and Dissent has been tried in all its varieties, “the ways of separation are still a labyrinth,” “from which there is no way out, but that whereby they entered.”

The practical departure of the Modern Church of England from the letter and spirit of her own Articles, as has but too evidently taken place from the days of her last Reformed Fathers, Bishops Davenant and Hall, has had the unhappy effect, of sending her reviving Evangelists to the School of Dissent for spiritual information, rather than to the more appropriate and legitimate School of the

Fathers of our own Reformation. Unnumbered volumes of the early Dissenters have been issued from the press within the last forty years, and have occupied that attention of our rising Evangelism, which should have been given to the works of our own Reformers. And what has been still more fatal to the progress of truth, Evangelical Members of our Church, have published either conjointly, or separately, the works of Dissenters, and represented it as a matter of indifference, whether as Churchmen, we have derived our knowledge from Authors of our Establishment or of Dissent. The deleterious effect of this indifferent application to either school for information, has been certain, though apparently unperceived. And the mischief is daily growing into greater magnitude, by the addition of importations of modern divinity from America, and Germany, and other quarters, to the exclusion of our own Reformers from Evangelical notice. Modern Evangelists see, that they cannot, with any hope of attaining just views of spiritual truth, apply to our writers of divinity since the Restoration; and either forgetful of their obligation to the Primitive Fathers of our Reformation, or disgusted with their antique phraseology, they take up with every species of Modern Evangelism, whether home or foreign; so wholly unjust are they to their obligations to their own Church, as not to reflect, whether this meagre Evangelism attains the doctrinal level of their own Scripture-proof Church. Articles, Homilies, Li-

turgy, and Catechisms of Established truth, whether subscribed, or unsubscribed, are forgotten; the approving Confessions of the Churches of the Reformation are neglected; the writers of the first half-century of the Reformation are considered as obsolete: and either for the most part the semi-gospel productions of Modern Evangelism, or the unecclesiastical<sup>1</sup> writings of Dissent, are indifferently substituted as interpreters of truth, to *their* exclusion. And thus the consequences in the deterioration of Reformed truth are most lamentable. Orthodoxy and Puseyism place the virtue of Baptism in the mere ceremony; and Evangelists equally disparage it as a Sacrament conveying and sealing the blessings of promise to the Church, by giving it no practical credit, or but little if any subsequent attention or regard, beyond the mere letter. While ultra-calvinists, as they are called, seem to smile at the Baptismal Service as despicable and unworthy of their regard, and to administer or use it merely because the Church requires it.

<sup>1</sup> It is by no means intended to deny that many learned useful, and edifying works have been written by Dissenters, and that the Church of Christ is bound to praise God, and them, as the instruments of his mercy, for many an excellent Commentary, and many a spiritual and able sermon and dissertation. But not only in reading such works must Churchmen suffer from the total omission of any reference to, or illustration of the Church Services or principles; but from the not unfrequent disparagements of them with which they must meet. Add to this, that the divinity of the Re-

The preaching of the Sacrament, as Tindal calls it, being esteemed as nothing ; and the preaching of the pulpit everything. And thus on one hand the Sacrament is either discarded or nullified ; while on the other, as it ever happens when truth is mistaken or perverted, “ the letter killeth,” it is “ the spirit ” alone that “ giveth life.”<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Where then may we expect to find Infant Baptism administered with effect ? Not among Baptists, or as they may more intelligibly be called formation is more truly Evangelical, Scripturally free and racy, and less humanly systematic, and squared by the rule and compass of any particular school, than the divinity of any subsequent era. What they wrote, they lived ; their divinity was not speculative, but practical ; not theoretic, but experimental ; it was full proof, for it was purified by fire. The divinity of the Reformation may not unjustly be called, the highest style of all, the most simple portraiture of Scripture ever yet exhibited to the Church after the Apostolic times.

<sup>1</sup> The practical evil of consulting other Authors than the Fathers of the Reformation, who were sound Churchmen appears in few things more plainly, than in the presumptuous, and exclusive statement of those, who must have a Communion of Saints of their own ; who admit no truth beyond the pale of their own spiritual dynastry ; who think slightly of ordinances ; and in fact as it were take the keys out of the hand of Christ, and have a hell as well as a heaven of their own. They have but little respect for the Reformers, or any constituted Persons or order : and their path verging daily more and more toward Dissent, Dissenting Authors as most agreeable to their taste, are most familiar to their perusal.

Antipædobaptists. Not among the Independent Dissenters, for their real Church-membership does not appear to be constituted by admission into the Church by Infant Baptism, but by admission to “the ordinance,” which seems to comprehend the virtue of both Sacraments in itself alone; the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper appearing to be equally that of admission to the faith, as of confirmation in the same. Neither among any Separatist from our Establishment, that I am aware of, who declines to baptise his child according to the spirit and privileges of our Church. Neither within the Church with either Orthodox or Puseyite who expects virtue from the mere ceremony; or Modern Evangelist who builds on *supposition* without subsequent practical application of the promise in the education of the Baptised child; nor can any other Churchman who does not present, and educate his child in faith on the promise as sealed by his Baptism, justly expect that Infant baptism should be administered with effect. In fact it is the man who brings his child to the font in virtue of the promise, for the effectual seal of the same, who seems to expect by his subsequent conduct, any benefit to result to his child. As a Believing Parent, he selects believing Sponsors, calls upon their faith for persevering prayer and vigilance, commends his child to the sympathies and prayers of the Church; and “trains up his child in the way that he should go,” as within the covenant of mercy, and influence of grace: and if he

finds his child's conduct to be discouraging, still cleaves to the promise of a covenant God made to him and his, and maintains faith and prayer for his child as the subject of promise to the last; till he ceases to be any longer the subject of faith and prayer, and has entered that eternal state, where the prayer of faith can no longer profit him. For if his faith fails, where is his hope?

I would willingly place the truth of this principle of Infant Baptism, as illustrated by our Church, on the evidence of fact. Congregations have been formed, and are even now forming on this principle. And in the degree in which Minister and People carry it out into effect, in that very degree does a blessed Communion of Saints arise: in that very degree does the Congregation become one family of love, the Infants of Believers have an interest in the sympathies and prayers of the Church, Believers stand forth as Sponsors to destitute children, Catechetical education is connected with the privileges and promises of Baptism; and the Parents live on the promise of a merciful God to the Children of the Church. And in whom does the Minister, thus desirous of working out the Baptismal principle of our Church find his chief opposition? Not in the negligence and indifference of the careless, or the coldness and ignorance of the mere orthodox; but in the faithless disparagement of the semi-evangelist, whose view of Baptismal blessedness rises no higher than that of Dissent: he will pay every



respect to the Sacrament of establishment, and approach it with a lively sense of privilege ; but to that of initiation he pays but little respect, regarding it rather as an institution to be dutifully observed than as a privilege to be gratefully enjoyed.

Where then is the remedy for this unhappy disparagement of the blessed Sacrament of Baptism which our Lord has expressly appointed as the seal and sign and pledge and means of membership in his Church ? for this is avowedly the Sacrament of membership in Christ : “ Go ye therefore and *disciple* all nations, baptizing them,” &c. Matt. xxviii. 19. Church-membership is constituted especially by partaking of this initiatory Sacrament, not by the virtual Anabaptism of the second. I ask then where is the remedy for the unhappy disparagement of Infant Baptism into which both Evangelical Churchmen and Dissenters have fallen ? I have stated them at large in the concluding letter of this work ; but there is one not insisted on there, which the present condition of the Church of Christ in this Land, as it consists both of Churchman and Dissenter, absolutely forces on our notice at the present moment : and this if he loves the cause of Christ and prefers it to that of Dissent, as much on the Dissenter as the Churchman.

That especial remedy is the union of all godly persons on the ground of some accredited and acknowledged standard of Scripture truth. This I am not aware that any sect of separation or denomination of Dissent possesses, or at least pro-

poses to Christians at large as a system of truth, to be received by all as a ground of agreement ; and without an appeal to such a standard I conceive the recovery of the Christian community from the ‘gangrene’ of schism to be hopeless.

Let the two following declarations of self-denying Nonconformity sink deep into the serious thoughts of every pious Dissenter.<sup>1</sup> “The ways of Separation,” are “a labyrinth, wherein men tire themselves, and grow giddy, as in a maze ; but when all is done, there is no way out, but that whereby they entered.” So counselled Nonconformity of old ; and has not experience during the last two centuries proved the truth of this remark ? Has not the labyrinth of Dissent been growing more and more perplexed ? Have not sects and divisions multiplied the mazes of this labyrinth from period to period ? Has not the vast labyrinth of Methodism been added to that of Independent Dissent ? Is not Methodism itself split into still increasing mazes of Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, Bryanites, &c. : and as Dissent increases, whether into larger or smaller sections, what does it do but multiply schism, and make separation more interminable ? And “when all is done,” and the Church is broken up into universal schism, “when all is done, there is no way out, but that whereby they entered.” What hope is there for any recovery from still increasing schism, but to return, and “find a way out,” by “that

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 507.

whereby they entered," even the acknowledged path of truth provided for them by the Established Church, from which these various schisms have been made. And does not the experience of every day confirm the remark of Julines Herring,<sup>1</sup> "It is a sin of a high nature," not a matter of indifference, and left, as commonly thought, to individual discretion, "to unchurch a nation at once, and that this would become the spring of many other fearful errors; for separation will eat like a gangrene into the heart of godliness. And he did pray, that they who would unchurch others, might not be unchristianed themselves." O how pressing is such a prayer at this present moment! Is it not notorious that Dissent by "unchurching others," has tended much to unchristian itself? Are not Arians and Socinians found in many of those assemblies whether as Ministers or People where sound Christianity once flourished? And in the sentiments of Arians and Socinians, are not the seeds of that broad-cast Liberalism, and sheer Infidelity found which tend to unchristian and Jacobinise the land? And has not "Separation eat like a gangrene into the heart of godliness," and the Party-spirit of Dissent put the plain considerations of godliness under its feet, to advance the cause of Dissent against the interests of the Established Church? And has not this "become the spring of many other fearful errors," both against Church and State, tend-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 509.

ing to overthrow the established order of both ; so that our modern experience has shown, and is showing, that it is a *sin of a high nature*, thus to attempt “to *unchurch a nation at once*,” and throw wide all the barriers of constituted rule, which the wisdom and piety of our forefathers have established, and thus to reduce the Church to a sect, and to justify schism by levelling established order with *voluntary* confusion ? If this be not “a sin of a high nature,” what is ? So great a sin was separation in the opinion of the man who uttered the above sentiment, that “he left the land of his nativity,” and voluntarily preferred becoming a banished man, rather than become a Dissenter from the Established Church.

Is it possible then that any man can believe that he benefits the cause of Christ, as he multiplies separation from the Established Protestant Church of these realms ? I ask again, and put it to the conscience of every man who will pause to consider, and whose prejudices have not deafened his ears to every other voice but that of Party, Is it possible that any reflecting man can believe that by multiplying sects he is indeed advancing Christian union ? Or that by attempting to reduce the National Church down to the level of multiform Dissent, he is advancing the cause of order or of Christ ? All such attempts to restore peace in the Church I cannot but deem infantine and sciolist ; defeating the very end at which they aim, and worse confounding confusion itself. The wisdom of the

Non-conformists has proved the only wisdom which experience confirms, "there is no way" for Dissenters out of their "labyrinth," "but that whereby they entered;" and the standard of Scripture truth which our Fathers of the Reformation originally planted in our Articles as the National Creed, so long approved of both by pious Conformist and Non-conformist, is that to which Dissenters may now well resort as the standard of National truth, if by one concurrent effort, both of holy Churchman and Dissenter, the cause of Christ, as a grand National surrender of prejudice to principle, is to be promoted.

It is evident that truth must assume some form of definite propositions, that all may know in what they are about to agree; men's sentiments must be vague and vacillating without some definite standard: and as the Scriptures themselves admit of the most contrary deductions according to the various complexions of men's minds and views, so a few leading propositions as constituting the essence of revealed truth, may well be proposed as the standard of general agreement; and where shall they be found more Scripturally expressed than in the Articles of the Established Church? It is true, there may be few persons who do not wish to submit particular expressions to re-consideration; but as the great object is unity of agreement in some definite exhibition of essential truth, it is well worth consideration, whether any one formulary now exists, or may hereafter be

drawn, which is liable to less objection, or which so accurately and impartially expresses the fundamental truths of Scripture as this.

To the pious Dissenter then who prefers the cause of Christ to every other consideration, and is desirous of promoting a general agreement among Christians, by bringing "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 5. I would say, If the cause of Christ is dear to you, you must see that it is promoted by union, and that the present disorder both in Church and State, is produced by disunion at large in the Church of Christ in this Land; you see the Church rent by various discrepancies of sentiment within, and of separation without the Establishment: and as in the language of the pious Nonconformist to unchurch a nation, will "become the spring of many other fearful errors," so as Dissent has been multiplied, the "nation" has been "unchurched," and errors and heresies of the most fearful description abound. How little was the first Separatist from the Established Church aware, that by his Dissent he was laying down a principle of endless confusion, which has terminated in the manifold disunion of our day; or rather, if it be permitted to attain its legitimate issue, shall not terminate till the Church has lost its Congregational Communion, and is split into mere sectional individuality. For it is clear, that the first man who left the Established Church, set an example of endless separation, which, if he was justified in his Dis-



sent, justified that of every one of his neighbours also. Once establish the principle, and it is childish to think of restraining the instance, either as to intensity of number or of error ; for if you separate from a Church confessedly of Established truth, on account of scandal or abuse, you open a door for every grade of objection, even to infidelity itself. You not only spoil the Church of its adult Members, but in spoiling it of them, you spoil it of its nascent communion, by withholding its infants from Baptism ; and as the Non-conformists foretold by disparaging Infant-baptism, you introduce virtual Anabaptism into the Church of Christ at large, and more especially deteriorate the due estimation of Baptism even in the Established Church itself: so that your dissent occasions a double mischief as to Infant-baptism, by not only subtracting its infant subjects from the font, but by degrading it as an instituted Sacrament of the Church in the opinion of those who remain. Add to these positive evils, which have shaken the Established Church to its foundation, and with which concussion our common Christianity has largely sympathised, those opportunities of good which you have lost, by not adhering to the Establishment. The first of these I consider, the building up of the grace of *patience* in tolerating the abuses in the Church which have scandalized you. I deem this scandal, as one of the most common occasions of Dissent, so one of its most unhappy occasions of deteriorating the Christian

character. The choicest part of which, and which presents it in its most accomplished exhibition of grace, is the manifestation of the passive graces. Zeal and love, and the like, are active graces, and their very activity conduces to the frequency and energy of their exercise; they acquire new strength by the velocity of their motion. But patience demands trial; it is "tribulation" that "worketh patience:" the passive graces are both formed and maintained by trial. "It came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham;" Gen. xxii. 1. it was the trial of his faith that both worked his patience, and confirmed it: and how truly blessed a character would the Dissenters have exhibited as Christians, had they, like the Non-conformists, patiently endured within the pale of the Establishment, praying for better days, and waiting for a season of reformation, as *they* did, rather than have quitted the Church; and by withdrawing both their prayers, their faith, their zeal, and alas! their charity, from her support, calmly shall I say, or unfeelingly, or even resentfully, have surrendered her to her own abuses, and her own corruption; and by withholding their support, and exchanging adherence for distraction, and attachment for hostility, dissipated the powers and influences of sanatory reformation, and rendered sound reformation still more distant and impracticable. If you had patiently occupied your station in the Establishment, with the piety and prayers of your adhesion, how sound a part of the

Church of Christ, might not the Established Church of these realms now have been ; and instead of its present distracted condition, (the blessed name of Christian being degraded by our Church divisions almost into the name of mere man, now regarding each other with jealousy, rivalry, and disgust,) one happy scene of Christian distinctiveness might have gladdened our eye, under a sound and salutary reform. Do but reflect, I beseech you, that your secession has confirmed the very abuses of which you complain, and rendered our reformation almost hopeless. Can you believe that men who abuse our Establishment by their venality, their carnal corruption, their wilful negligence, their ignorance, or their indifference to the spiritual character of our Church, will ever become voluntary agents of her reformation ? Can you reasonably hope that the very men who batten on her corruptions, will be the first to correct them ? When did ever corruption correct itself ? No, it is the good who must correct the bad by the influence of their example, the aggressive invasion of their pious conversation, the holy infusion of their graces, and the ardent charity of their prayers. To separate from the Church, is to yield her up to the mouldering decay of her own corruptions ; while still to adhere to her, and to unite your graces with those of her sounder portion, may yet be blest as the means of reclaiming her from her errors, and restoring her as a general blessing to the Land. What the Non-conformists

foresaw would be the result of your dissent, the experience of the last two centuries has confirmed ; “ That if God should give opportunity and hopes of Church-reformation, that we might be eased of our present grievances, the Brethren of the New Separation,” or the asserters of “ Independency in England,” would be found to be the greatest obstructors thereof.” And surely the experience of our modern day has awfully verified this foreboding ; since during the latter days of Reform, when Church-reformation has been under discussion, and still is, and many are now contemplating this desirable event with many a secret prayer for success, that God may improve the present disposition for reform to the effectual restoration of our Established Church to the purity of her Reformation, and the mitigation of the rigour of some of our rubrics from *imperative* to *discretionary*, for the purpose of conciliating Dissent, yet what aid have modern Dissenters furnished towards this Reform ? What conciliating proposals have they advanced ? Does not the truth of our experience compel us to confess, that Dissenters have been the decided “ obstructors ” of our reformation ; and rather than put forth a helping-hand to the work, has there not been too general and too clamorous an outcry of Radical extermination, “ down with it, down with it, even to the ground.” And if this is the voice of experience as to the obstruction offered by Dissenters to the present reform of our Church ; is not the voice of experience

equally loud in the condemnation of the voluntary principle as efficient to evangelise the land? What has it done during the last two centuries? Supine and defective as the Establishment has been in supplying the Ecclesiastical wants of its people, yet has Dissent attempted any adequate supply? much less, should Dissent attain its object in the suppression of the National Church, has it proposed a voluntary substitute for the defalcation of the Establishment? From the inadequacy of its past exertions, then, can any prudent Churchman or Dissenter anticipate any future sufficiency of Ecclesiastical provision from the voluntary exertions of Dissent? Let the voice of the past, then, or more especially that of the present, be calmly and honestly attended to. Continued clamours from without, much more, increased hostility against the Establishment, and increased secession from it, can only paralyse her efficiency, and diminish her powers of a sound Reform. Rather return to the Church, and add your energies to those of her friends within, who are indeed her best friends, and are desirous of promoting her solid usefulness, by restoring her to the purity of her Reformation. To multiply sects is but to confound and to weaken, as experience has proved; while to return to the Establishment with all its present abuses upon it, is to supply new strength, and to increase the means by which these abuses may, under God, be corrected, and the National Church rendered the efficient instrument of those spiritual blessings,

which she is expressly constituted to dispense. In these days the Church must be reformed : it is the concentration of reforming agency which is alone wanting, to give that agency its due scope and power ; and by your renewed adherence how vast a blessing will you be conferring on the Establishment, and through the Establishment to the whole Church of Christ throughout the Land ? Suspend, I intreat you, your Dissenting prejudices at least for a season ; and calmly reflect, whether the experience of the past, the improbabilities of the present, or the probabilities of the future, afford any solid ground of hope, that the voluntary principle, constrained as it is by the manifold jealousies and discrepancies of Dissent, can ever be justly expected to evangelise the Land ? Is harmony of sentiment the necessary result of the multiplying of Dissent from the Establishment ? Is it not rather the necessary occasion of increased confusion ; and that in the very degree it is multiplied ? It is not the division but the concentration of the tributary streams in the mouth of the mighty river that forms its gulf. And would all the Churches throughout the Land but flow in one common channel of order, neither zeal nor charity would any longer complain of dissipation and deficiency, but united effort would be blessed with united success. Let your efforts then be voluntary, but let them exhibit a voluntary concurrence with the Ecclesiastical provisions of the Establishment. Voluntary-



ism is the very principle on which our Church was originally established. Christianity recommended itself to the acceptance of our ancestors by its own loveliness and suitableness; and as each individual Chief or village applied to the neighbouring Bishop for a ministering Priest, or accepted the Missionary Minister, and provided a church, and maintenance for his ministration and support, so Parish was added to Parish, Deanery to Deanery, Diocese to Diocese, till each particular kingdom gave it the sanction of its laws, and Christianity became the aggregate blessing of the Land. It was not Dissent, with its variety of order, that gave establishment to our Church; it was Voluntaryism with its one consistent and concurring order under one approved regime, that multiplied Christian Churches throughout the Land, till the sanction of the State confirmed that choicest blessing ever yet bestowed on man, the religion of Jesus, which claimed acceptance and establishment as that sole and distinctive name in which all the nations should be blessed. As you value then the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the spread of the pure gospel through the Land, return from the "labyrinth" of Dissent to the order of the Establishment; add your prayers, your energies, and your influence to the sound portion of those within: no longer impede the progress of Church-reformation, by distracting either Infants from her Baptismal font as nascent members of her growing communion, or adults from her table of Sacramental establish-

ment. Our Church as a system is still mighty and efficient: much of its detail, it is admitted, is decayed, but its principle is still sound, and is in fact the only sound principle of a Church in the Country; as her aim and object also is the most charitable and complete. She aims at that which no sect contemplates, the evangelising of the whole realm, and she adapts her machinery to the magnitude of her object. Try the soundness of our principle, by aiding us to work that machinery which can alone effect it. This is the season of reform; you cannot unite yourselves to us at a more favourable juncture; we invite you, not to the unyielding counsels of Hampton-Court, or to the litigious syllogisms of the Savoy; but we invite you to return with heart and hand to the intelligible and Scriptural standard of our Church of the Reformation; to aid us in preaching and living its blessed doctrines, and in establishing the efficient discipline, and the pure and Apostolic practice which, with God's blessing, may be the means of carrying it into the most complete effect.

Remember, while you continue Dissenters according to the sentiments of the Non-conformists, you are encouraging Anabaptism, you are preventing Church-reformation, you are preying like "a gangrene" on the vitals of the true Church, and you are multiplying confusion. If you return to the Church, you are establishing order, you are improving discipline, you are infusing health and strength into her constitution, and you are pro-

moting, under God, her sound and salutary reform. And, O remember, it is not the form of Christianity that is now agitated, or the comparative excellency of Church or Dissent: it is whether Christianity in any form shall have an ostensible existence among us. And do not forget, that if the National Church is overthrown, your distinction as a Dissenter ceases with that of the Church which now protects you: you may call yourselves Independents, but neither you nor any other sect of Christians can be independent of the National Church; for if she falls, you fall with her. Return then to your mother: reform and support her with your energies and graces; and in her stability behold your own.

But if we call on Dissenters for a surrender of their separation on one hand, we call on Churchmen for the surrender of that which scandalizes Dissenters on the other; and we lay the same foundation for the surrender of Churchmen, and express it in the same declarations of the Non-conformists as we address to the Dissenters.

Dissenters have disparaged Infant-baptism, and introduced Anabaptism without the Church; and unhappily have been the means of sinking the gage of Baptismal principle in the view of the soundest portion of Churchmen within it: and thus have paralysed the exertion of Churchmen in giving effect to one of the most efficient means of maintaining and increasing the Communion of saints within the Establishment. It is my object

then to impress on Churchmen, first, how great are the evils of Dissent, and that, not only in the distraction of man from man, as he is a Member of the Church of Christ, but also, in that especially, which seems to attract so little of the regard of Churchmen, the disparagement and disruption of the nascent communion of the Church as connected with the Infant reception of the Sacrament of Baptism. Add to this, that on the declaration of Non-conformists, "The ways of Separation are a labyrinth," from which, "when all is done, there is no way out, but that whereby they entered:" and while Churchmen reflect on this sentiment, let them remember, that it is their bounden duty to remove every stumbling-block that may prevent the Dissenter from finding "his way out," and returning to the Church. Let the Churchman also reflect, that "It is a sin of a high nature to unchurch a nation at once," and that "Separation," both does and "will eat like a gangrene into the heart of godliness;" and while he reflects, let him arrive at this conclusion, that "it is a sin of a high nature," in him to provoke the Dissenter by his abuses, depravities, and defects to "unchurch the Nation;" and that as he is a Churchman, it is his duty, his privilege, and his interest, to undissent the Dissenter, that his Dissent should no longer "eat like a gangrene into the heart of godliness." While then I lay these considerations before the Dissenter to induce him to return to the Church, and by his adhesion to promote her

reform; I at least, with equal earnestness, urge them on the mind of the Churchman; that he may do all in his power, to facilitate the return and adhesion of the Dissenter. Let him not forget, that he is a member of the National Church of England, and that the Dissenter, as his name declares, is a Separatist therefrom; and that, for the mutual good both of Churchman and Dissenter, it is his indispensable duty to adopt every honestly practicable measure, by which he may induce the Separatist to re-unite himself to the Church.

Here then I address the Churchman directly, as I have the Dissenter above, and ask you no longer to complain of Dissent while you are doing every thing, or any thing to occasion, to maintain, or to increase it. It is the abuse within the Church, which occasions separation from it. Every Bishop consecrated to his high office by a mere political appointment, from Party motives, from family or State connexion, from mere scholarship, from ambitious desires of self-elevation, or family aggrandisement, or any other account than to promote the glory of Christ, or the spiritual welfare of man, is an abuse of Church power, Church provision, and Church opportunity; an abuse of the patronage of the State in corrupting the Church, an abuse of station, place, influence, and authority, in introducing "spiritual wickedness" into its "High Places." Eph. vi. 12. So again, every Bishop who considers his Ecclesiastical elevation as the means of advancing his family, of indulging

his nepotism, by quartering his son, or brother, or nephew, at best, probably, of mere negative character as a Divine, on the revenues or station of the Church, or who elevates the mere scholar or gentleman, or busy official, or high-churchman, or low-churchman, or political partisan to Church preferment without a supreme regard to his spiritual proficiency, Clerical competency, and peculiar adaptation to his place, by his evident disregard both of the duties of his own office, and the immortal welfare of the souls committed to his charge, (for, O most overwhelming consideration, every soul in his Diocese is committed to his Episcopal charge) increases Dissent as he multiplies abuse. But we must not stop at this low grade of Episcopal responsibility, and charge *him* with official delinquency who thus grossly abuses his high function; we must ascend far higher, and place before the accomplished Bishop the doctrinal standard, and Clerical efficiency of our Church as marked out in the Articles and Homilies and Liturgy and example of our Reformation. The Bishop who does not aim to prefer and patronise Ministers of this high Evangelical tone of doctrine and practice, is in fact unjust to the requisitions of our Church, is patronising an incompetent ministry, and abusing the Church. And should it be the fashion of the day, to consider this doctrine and practice as excessive and undue, it is evident that an incompetent ministry must abound in the Church, and hence general corruption and abuse.



And if the time shall arrive when the patronage of the Bishop selects every other character but that of the Minister of the Reformation, and especially if he rather selects that as the subject of his exclusion than of his adoption, we shall not have far to go for the pregnant cause of the abuses and the corruptions, which may desolate the Church, and thus "Unchurch the Nation," by the necessary prevalence of Dissent. And as in the degree that the doctrines of the Reformation are patronised by the Bishops, may the Church be expected to flourish; so, on the contrary, as any other consideration than that of proficiency in the doctrine and practice of the Reformation influences their choice in ordination or patronage, in that very degree must ignorant prejudice, erroneous doctrine, heretical pravity, corrupt practice, carnal worldliness, and general abuse be fostered, and thus Dissent abound, and the "Nation be Unchurched."

And in like manner according to the influence of his station and place, every Minister in our Church, and every Official as he holds the Evangelical doctrines and imitates the holy practice of our Reformation, by the good or evil exercise of his Ministry and influence of his example diminishes or increases Dissent. It is quite natural that the Minister who is most ignorant, or erroneous as to doctrine, and most loose in his example, should be the most loud in his complaint of the increase of Dissent; it is his own delinquency which scandalizes the Dissenter, and increases or confirms Dissent;

while he may be either too ignorant to discern, or too disingenuous to admit it. And let him first return to the doctrine of his Articles, and the due performance of his functions, before he expects the Dissenter to return to the Church from which its abuses have driven him. The cure of souls is the great object of the ministry; and it is clear, that as the Minister perverts his office to mere secular purposes, or is indifferent or negligent in the discharge of the same, in that degree does he occasion abuse, establish Dissent, and “Unchurch the Nation.”

Every Layman also who has been baptised into our Church, or who professes to belong to the Establishment, lies under the same responsibility. His disregard of his Baptismal privileges and vows, his neglect of ordinances and means of grace, his personal ungodliness, his family worldliness, his mere orthodoxy of sentiment, his fashionable Churchmanship, and habitual indulgence in those vanities and lusts which his profession of Churchmanship obliges him to renounce,—all occasions the scandal of one great prominent example of unspirituality and ungodliness, for which the Established Church is rendered responsible; and which has given birth to that overwhelming Liberalism which is the combined result of abuse within the Church, and of Dissent without it; and which, if not amended, by one common return of Churchman and Dissenter to the Church of the Reformation, threatens to over-

whelm both Churchman and Dissenter in one indiscriminate ruin, and “to unchurch and unchristian the nation at once.”

Nor let the Liberal, the Deist, the Infidel, the Socinian, the Arian, or any Separatist of any description flatter himself, that he is divested of responsibility in weakening or abusing the Church by his contemptuous indifference, his unchristian Liberalism, or his reckless infidelity. No man that I am aware of, has yet proved that the Constitution of the Church does not equally demand concurrence and obedience, with the Constitution of the State. The Bible is as truly part and parcel of the law of the Land, as a law to impose a tax on property, or a restraint on person. And the whole of the truths of the Bible, and the Constitution of the Established Church, to inculcate those truths, and to render them efficient in forming the principles and manners of every citizen, according to its rules of faith and practice, is as imperative on every citizen to obey them, as the Constitution of the State is imperative in imposing the tax or restraining the person. The same God who in his providence has raised up the Civil Magistrate to rule the land in temporals, has equally raised up the same Magistrate in every Christian land to evangelise the people with a Christian principle and practice, and to arrange such a Church-order and discipline, as shall make his people good subjects as they are made real Christians. If God has given him subjects to

rule, he has also given him means of grace in a constituted Church; and he requires that Magistrate to use those means and to provide an efficient arrangement for their use, by which his people shall become the best subjects, by being the best Christians; and while they sincerely love God, shall sincerely love their brother also. And the rules of the Bible and the worship of the National Church, are as much to be observed by the conscientious subject, as the Laws of the State are to be observed, if the obedience of the citizen is to be actuated by the genuine motive, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." 1 Pet. xi. 13. And it is for the most part idle to talk of conscientious objections entertained by the Dissenter to this plain duty. Subtract the prejudices of birth and education, the mere force of example and authority, the convenience of opportunity, the hasty impressions received from abuse in the Establishment and acted on in impatient and unreasonable separation, offence taken at long prayers, prescribed prayers, incompetent or unpopular ministry, want of convenient place, &c.; disgust taken by wounded pride and consequence, from all its manifold subjects of Minister, worship, Congregation, want of sympathy, respect, attention to person or rank; together with ignorance, vanity, presumption, and all the ever-varying shades of arrogance, caprice, and self-will, that native and darling disposition of the soul to independence and self-control—I

say subtract all this mass of irrelative and unreasonable motive for separation, and truly but little room will remain for the operation of intelligent and conscientious Dissent. From the motives which we know, and are continually feeling as Churchmen, which are operating around us to induce men to Dissent, can we believe that a large mass of what are called "conscientious scruples," are any more than prejudices, ignorances, caprices, resentments, imperfect conclusions, and insufficient motives? Who has deliberately sat down, considered the claim the State has upon him to obey "the powers that be," and asked himself 'Is it not equally my duty to obey the Magistrate in the laws he provides to regulate the Church as the State? It is clear that I cannot make any indifferent thing, as to form, the just subject of conscientious separation from what is lawfully constituted, and do not the doctrines of the Church as fairly present the great leading truths of God's revealed will as I can hope to have them presented to me in any profession or place of Dissent? Is not imperfection written on all that is human? and the great main points of truth being secured, may not my scruples conscientiously submit to the claim of obedience, union, and agreement?" Let every Dissenter thus conscientiously consider the claims of the State under the civil protection of which he lives, to unite with that Church which is the blessing and strength of the State, and let him solemnly reflect whether much of the argu-

ment for Dissent at the present day is not altogether novel, unknown to his Forefathers, and the real produce of that infidelity to which separation from constituted order has paved the way? Let every Liberal and Infidel consider that it is no light or indifferent thing, whether by his faith and conduct he supports the religion of his country or not; that even heathen Magistrates have ever made it obligatory on their subjects to venerate their Country's God though he might be false; and does it never disturb the conscience of the Liberal or Infidel, (for conscience he knows that he has, in spite of all his efforts to suppress its suggestions) that the Bible is written by the true God; that its doctrines are truth, and that he in common with all who inhabit the same Country and the same world, must one day "stand before the judgment-seat of God?" Let the Churchman also remember, that he must answer there, for that conduct which has stumbled the Liberal and the Infidel, and both "unchurched and unchristianed" him by its inconsistencies, and for those abuses of his Church privileges by which he has unchurched the Dissenter; and let them all return to that one great standard of truth founded on the effectual word of the living God, which it pleased him to bestow on this Land in the blessed hour of the Reformation; of which all the foreign Reformed Churches approved; for which martyrs have profusely bled; which for the last three centuries has been the honoured means



of upholding genuine Christianity in the Land, amidst all our abuses, corruptions, dissensions, and declinings ; and which, at the present day, as we resort to its shadow, shall be the means of correcting all our errors, healing all our dissensions, enlightening all our darkness, inspiring us under the Divine blessing, with one Creed, one worship, one heart, one mind, to strive together for the faith of the Gospel ; that thus the Church shall be, what the State intends it to be, under the influence of her all-sufficient Head, the Mother of every spiritual privilege, of every social virtue, and of every heavenly grace.

As I have called on Dissenters before, so I now call on my brethren of the Church, not only to correct abuses of which all complain, but also to conciliate the Dissenter to return to the Church, and to unite with us, in attempting such a sound and effectual Reform, as may deprive him of his argument for separation ; and by removing the abuses of the Church, remove his objections, and consequently his Dissent. Let us all return to our principles. The Reformed Church presented renewed Christianity in its purest mode yet known to the Country. It was Puritan Non-conformity which, by its hesitation to unite in circumstances, first deprived itself of that power to make the Reformation more complete, which its adhesion to the Church might have given it opportunity to have effected ; and was itself the unwilling parent of that ruinous Dissent which itself depre-

cated, and in the rise of which it foretold the disruption of our Church-communion, by the introduction of Anabaptism, and its effectual opposition to Reform. Dissent aims to destroy; and its enmity prevents all wish to reform that at the destruction of which it aims. Reformation is preservation; and it is by reforming alone that we deprive Dissent of its argument, and not only prevent its opposition, but induce its concurrence. The Reformation presents the fairest Church-model to our choice; let both Churchman and Dissenter accept it as such, and concur not only in correcting its abuses, but in completing its perfection. Here at least will be some common ground of agreement, an advantage which Dissent with its ever-varying negations never can present, for increasing Dissent is in fact increasing confusion.

On whom then as a Churchman, most desirous of promoting the peace of the Church, and in it the preservation of our common Christianity, as the richest blessing to our beloved Country, and through it to the world at large; shall I call to carry this obvious policy into effect? I am naturally led to solicit the attention of the most influential body which the Church contains. To you then, Reverend Fathers in God, whom God in his providence has placed over us as the Bishops of our Church, permit me to address myself with that deference which is due to your station and authority. In no division of the Church of Christ that I am aware of, are Ecclesiastical Rulers possessed

of greater influence or power, than in that which it has pleased God to intrust to you. As Bishops of the flock appointed to the ordination of every Minister of the Church, all Church patronage is in effect in your hands. You have not only the awful privilege of selecting the Ministers who shall fill the benefices in your respective patronage in each particular See; but to you is above all committed, the exclusive privilege of Ecclesiastical ordination: and in this character as Bishops you are the universal Patrons of every Ecclesiastical station in the realm: for neither the King, nor the State, nor Corporate body, nor private Patron, can appoint to Ecclesiastical station any other Minister than those whom you please to invest with that "holy function." On you therefore as the Bishops of the realm, must essentially rest the character of the Established Church: for you have not only, each of you in your respective Dioceses, sufficient patronage to select such Ministers as may prove examples of patronage to every Patron around you, (every Minister you freely appoint, being but the exemplar of your own standard of Churchmanship,) but every Minister of the Establishment is only a Minister, as he is ordained by you: his exclusion or his admission rests with you: and it is yours, under God, to form a Clergy after the accredited formularies of our Church, the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy, and to present to the Church, the Clergy of the Reformation; or to admit to holy orders and

Clerical responsibility Ministers formed after the modern school of Tillotson and Nelson; and thus to supersede the genuine and original Church of the Reformation, founded on the promise of eternal life, on free grace, sovereign mercy, and the unbounded love of the Gospel. It is your privilege, if improved, to ordain Jewell or Hooker: if abused, to reject them.

You are eminently the chief Pastors of that more “pure and reformed part of” the Church of Christ “established in these realms.” Our Articles are Articles of the Reformation; our Liturgy is the Liturgy of the Reformation; our Homilies are the Homilies of the Reformation; and our discipline, the deficiency of which our Reformers have taught us annually to lament in our Congregations, though partially corrected, is still the discipline of the Reformation. It is the Established Church of the Reformation then, which you are consecrated to rule and dispense; and as the great features of the Reformation are presented to the Church in these modern days by the sentiments, and practices, and patronage, and diversified ministrations of you, Reverend Fathers in God, so will our Church be duly represented as the Church of the Reformation; and so shall we be taught to regard with becoming gratitude those blessed men who, by God’s blessing, were the honoured instruments of reforming us, and to revere “the judgment and practice of those reverend Fathers and great Divines in the days of

King Edward the Sixth, of whom some constantly suffered for the profession of the truth.”<sup>1</sup>

Permit me to submit to your consideration, that as Bishops instituted for the purpose of continuing to this Land the blessings of the doctrine and practice of the Reformation, the Church is entitled to expect at your hands, that you will not only patronise those of the Clergy, whose doctrine and ministrations most resemble those of the Reformers, but that those whom you admit to ordination shall be Ministers formed after the same model, and that it will be your great object both by your own “preaching and living,” to set an example of the same. Upon you, Reverend Fathers in God, it is our privilege to fix our eyes both as Ministers and people of the Church, that in the various departments of your duty, whether in the Palace, the Cathedral, the Diocese, or Parliament, you may exhibit to us such an example of wisdom and piety, as may present to us, in lively portraiture, the excellences and graces of the venerable Fathers of the Reformation.

It is to the accredited formularies of the Reformation, so long cherished by our Church, that, as Churchmen or Dissenters, the people of this Land, it is presumed, can justly look as exhibiting that authorised and original model of Protestant truth which can be proposed as the common Scriptural standard of God’s revealed will. We

<sup>1</sup> See the Thirtieth Canon of our Church.

look in vain for any other standard than that, which now, for three centuries has been accredited by Church and State; it is true that for the last two centuries for the most part, the Church of England has, in practice, been departing from the simplicity, spirit, and Scriptural accuracy of her authorised standard; till her Articles were sinking into neglect, her Homilies were becoming obsolete, and her Liturgy was more supported by the periodical ministrations of the Church, than by the spirit infused into its worship by the spiritual and intelligent comprehension of the great Scriptural verities recommended in the Articles and Homilies of our Church; but amidst all our declinings from the simplicity of Gospel grace, to the self-flattering vanities of modern divinity, and amidst every variety of proposal to interfere with the above authorised model, the Established Church has never by her authority departed from her original standard of truth, and it is as really in force at this day, as it was at the hour of the blessed Reformation.

For the correction then of the principal evils now complained of in the Church, and for the healing of our dissensions both within and without the same, are we calling upon you, Reverend Fathers in God, for the undue exercise of your influence and authority, when we suggest to you this ready cure of all our differences, under God, the restoration of the primitive principles and practices of the Reformation in all the departments of our



Established Church. That it be the object of your *charges*, and of those of your Archdeacons under your government, to direct the attention of your Clergy especially to the doctrines of the Reformation as expressed in the received formularies of our Church ; that every candidate for orders be not only competently informed in the history of the Reformation, and be also spiritually imbued with its doctrines as contained in the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy ; but that these be well studied and digested, according to the comments of the venerable Hooker, and other well-known Divines of his day ; so that not merely a learned, but a “godly learned Clergy,” as our Reformers express it, may receive your ordination, and be sent forth to minister to the people. That your *charges* further recommend, and that your influence give effect to the recommendation, that there shall be a special education of young men intended for the ministry ; and since the Universities really teach no greater degree of Christian knowledge than it is becoming an English gentleman to obtain ; some special opportunity of acquiring that knowledge, those practices and habits of Parochial duty, Ministerial efficiency both in and out of the Church, intelligent mode of reading the Scriptures and the Liturgy, composing of sermons, and Clerical addresses on occasion of visiting the sick-chamber, superintendence of schools, and that ready extemporaneous expression, which, like our great forefathers of the Reformation, renders all our

knowledge efficiently applicable to every Ministerial purpose be provided; more especially qualifying the Minister for that first style of pulpit address, extemporaneous exposition of the word of God, the alone great security, it is apprehended, for the manifestation of the integral word of God to the people, —a mode which favours no man's predilections or prejudices, or infirmities of judgment, or slavery to names or doctrines; but which calls upon him by the continuous exposition of the context, to give to every successive portion of the word of God the sense which each portion, under the hoped-for teaching of the Spirit may suggest. And that besides the daily service in the Church (a practice which it is suggested, should be recommended by your *charges* to our renewal) the habit should be restored of giving this "reading" or familiar exposition on two appointed week days, as it was in the Church of Exeter under the Bishops Coverdale, Alleie, and Hall. What but increased zeal in our Bishops and Ministers can be the means of preserving us from the busy energies of Popery or Dissent?

May I be permitted further to suggest, that the study of the Hebrew language, as in the days of the Reformation, should form the special recommendation of *charges* to the Clergy from the Episcopal chair; together with particular attention to our authorised formularies, that they should be the periodical subjects of lectures to the people: that the Articles should be familiarly explained to the

people once a year at least, during the present ignorance of these things, together with the Homilies and Liturgy; and that the admirable consistency of these authorised works of the Reformation with each other, should be plainly pointed out, and that reference should be made to the works of our own Reformers, as well as those of foreign Reformed Churches, to show the general spirit and character of the Reformation: that a competent knowledge of these formularies should be expected from every Deacon before ordination, as at once affording an evidence of his knowledge of sound Scriptural divinity, according to the principles and views of the Church in the ministrations of which he is about to engage; and as a security, so far as knowledge is concerned, of his sufficiency of Scripture attainment. That hints be given for Parochial management, weekly Services in the Church in Prayers and Lectures, &c. District visitors; and employment of pious Laymen in these visitations, and in generally strengthening the Minister's hands; for Catechists, Scripture Readers, &c. And that Curates be especially encouraged, and Rectors exhorted to liberality and kind forbearance and unanimity; but that solid evidences of this encouragement be given by a distinct understanding, that it is the intention of the Bishop, to make his Curates the first objects of his patronage; and that generally he shall be happy to cultivate a friendly intercourse with his Clergy, whether by their visits at the Episcopal

residence, or his occasional visits at their houses ; thus familiarising himself with his Diocese, and cementing every portion of it, as a Communion of Saints, in spiritual sympathy and love. And that all *charges* usually terminate, by refreshing the attention of the Clergy to the observation of the Ember Weeks : that they be particularly observed in all Congregations by daily prayer, for “ all those who are to be called to any office or administration ” in the Church ; and that it be intimated, in consistency with the same, that the Bishop will be guided by the rule of the thirty-first Canon, that “ No Deacons or Ministers be made and ordained, but upon the Sunday immediately following *Jejunia quatuor temporum*, commonly called Ember Weeks, appointed in ancient time for prayer and fasting, (purposely for this cause at their first institution) and so continued at this day in the Church of England.” And let it be understood, that these Sundays will be marked by public ordinations in the Cathedral Church ; and how large an interest might be taken, and what “ effectual fervent prayer of ” many a “ righteous man ” might be offered, which might draw down blessings on the Bishop, the Ministers, and the Church ? But what general feeling can be excited in this most interesting work, conducted as it now is for the most part, and but little known beyond the Parties immediately engaged in it !

Nor should the whole Ecclesiastical array of Churchwardens, Sidesmen, Overseers, Parish-

clerks, and Schoolmasters be forgotten, as subjects of Episcopal interest and advice, in *charges* from the Communion chair; a most efficient instrumentality in a well-ordered state of the Church; as truly conducing to the spiritual welfare of a Parish as the Minister himself, whose hands they are appointed to strengthen, and to whose ministrations they are considered as effectual assistants and supporters: the wasting decline of whose official agency in supporting the Parochial Minister has not only been produced by Dissent, but is a principal means of increasing it also. Only let the peculiar instrumentality of each of these important Officials be again resuscitated according to the design of the Reformation, and Parochial vitality would again be felt, which would strike one chord of Ecclesiastical sympathy from the Parish to the Rural Deanery; from the Rural Deanery, to the Arch-deaconry; from the Arch-deaconry, to the Diocese, Cathedral and Palace of the Bishop; nor would it terminate till it arrived at the confluence of its efficiency in the House of Peers; and every Bishop, as a Peer of Parliament, felt and acted as a “Lord Spiritual,” pouring forth his spiritual power, where the chief moral influence of the State is most felt, in the heart of the Legislature; and thus the Established Church, not in name, nor in rank only, but in virtue, in piety, in solid wisdom, and in spiritual power would really rule the State; and that not by the crafty policy of mere Statesmen, nor by party

spirit, or influential *privilege*, but by the legitimate exercise of her acknowledged wisdom, and influential grace.

But in vain would these *charges* of renewed Reformation sound from the Episcopal chair, without the renewing of those motive principles which can alone give life to such a practice. For the free grace of all those Articles, which exhibit the Gospel of the Reformation in its richest lustre, must be continually enforced from the Bishop's *charge*, to the most ordinary pulpit address, before this day of renewed Reformation can be justly expected. But let us not, in despair of this desirable issue, sit still, and make no progress towards Reform. Let us rather attempt all, and by God's blessing we shall effect some. Let us aim at the highest, remembering that the smallest progress will be comparative amendment.

And as Bishops of the Reformation, may we not consistently expect that your *charges* will especially direct our attention to the peculiar piety, wisdom, long-suffering, and dauntless fortitude of those blessed men, whom God selected as his instruments of the same? That what remains of their works should again be brought forth from the obscurity to which they have been unjustly condemned, for the last two centuries; and that as the best illustration of the real meaning of our formularies and services, their respective sentiments should again be recommended to the Church; by the general concurrence of which it may be seen,



though some discrepancies of no vital importance obtained among them, how harmoniously they agreed among themselves, and with the foreign Reformers of their day, in inculcating those doctrines of grace, of free mercy, and sovereign love, which so eminently characterise the three great accredited standards of our Church, together with all the other authorised productions of our Reformation.

And as an Association has been lately formed among Churchmen for this purpose, already embracing many hundred names, under the title of "THE PARKER SOCIETY for the publication of the works of the Fathers, and early writers of the English Church," from the honoured name of Archbishop Parker, by whose especial care and sedulity, many of the original documents of our Church have been carefully preserved, and handed down in safety to us,<sup>1</sup> may we not justly hope that as Bishops of the Reformation you will grant your kind and fostering patronage to this good work; or more especially that you may deem it right to avail yourselves of this opportunity, to improve the large Society already existing in the Church for Promoting Christian Knowledge to the more

<sup>1</sup> "He (Archbishop Parker,) was a great collector of ancient and modern writings, and took especial care of the safe preservation of them for all succeeding times; as foreseeing undoubtedly what use might be made of them by posterity; that by having recourse to such originals and precedents, the true knowledge of things might the better appear."—*Strype*.

effectual support of our Church: the positive evil of which, in circulating abundance of tracts and publications subversive of the doctrines of the Reformation is so broadly asserted. How truly blessed would your interference at this most important moment be considered, would you now, Reverend Fathers in God, exercise the large influence you possess as Patrons and supporters of this Society, in correcting its issue of publications by superseding the mass of its present productions, which do not harmonise with the doctrines of our Church, by introducing the works of our Reformers as tracts and volumes in their place! May it please God thus to bless your patronage as Bishops of the Reformation; for there are many, who concur in the sentiment, that if this mighty engine of good or evil were thus improved in its direction under your Episcopal patronage, in as powerfully recommending the Reformation, as it is stated at present to oppose it, by many of the works which it circulates; "there is hope in Israel," that, by the blessing of God, our Church might yet survive both its outward foes, and inward corruptions; especially that which under the influence of its largest associated Lay and Clerical patronage, employs much of its means in distributing doctrines unacknowledged by "the Great Divines" of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup>

Under this sanatory exercise of Episcopal in-

<sup>1</sup> "November 17, 1558, Queen Mary, being long sick before," says Fox, "upon the said 17th day of November,

fluence, with the blessing of God on the prayers of the Church, what blessings should consecrate that distinguished and devoted man, who shall rise a second Cranmer in this day of renewed Reformation, and those second Riddleys and Latimers who shall rise up to his assistance ! other Collets and Nowells may fill our Deaneries, other Philpots our Arch-deaconries, other Rogers's and Bradfords our Prebends, and other Sanders and Taylors our Livings in Town and Country. The days of improved Reformation may return ; and after the sad experience of three hundred years, Churchmen may be effectually taught, that

in the year above said, about three or four o'clock in the morning [died], yielding life to nature, and her kingdom to Queen Elizabeth her sister," and on that day Queen Elizabeth " took the kingdom," and was proclaimed about twelve o'clock. And about twelve o'clock on the 17th day of November, 1840, the Council of the Parker Society met ; and by the blessing of God with prayer and thanksgiving, instituted that Society, " for the publication of the works of the Fathers, and early writers of the English Church," with the support of about twelve hundred Members, and the hope of many more. In this establishment I acknowledge many a desire accomplished, many a hope confirmed, and many a prayer granted ; and may abundant prayers still continue to be offered, that it may prove God's richest blessing to our Church, and be prospered as the cradle of renewed Reformation. I add this expression of gratitude, as this sheet is preparing for the press.

The Prospectus announces, " This Society is formed upon the plan which has been found very successful by the " Camden Society," for the publication of historical works."

our abuses arise from deserting the letter and spirit of the Articles of the Reformation ; Non-conformists, that offence taken at ceremonies and externals, but paves the way for disunion and Dissent ; and Dissenters, that once to open the door for separation from the Established Church, is to admit a latitude of profession and non-profession, which no man can conceive, much less control ; and that the only way of extricating themselves from the “labyrinth,” in which they are perplexed, is not to multiply Dissent, but to return to the Church : since “when all is done, there is no way out, but that whereby they entered.”

And let it never be forgotten, that it is vain to propose as a ground of union the modern divinity of the Tillotson and Nelson School, or any modern system whatever, were it possible to fix or define it ; and that if the principle of truth as exhibited at the Reformation be not brought back both in profession and practice by our Church, and proposed as the ground of union ; there is no other *apparent* standard of truth which we can propose ; and that increasing Dissent can only produce increasing disunion and confusion.

And here may I be allowed to rejoice with our Church at that revived spirit of our day, which in the building of churches, and the application of similar means, is seeking to supply an Ecclesiastical provision proportionate to the wants of the people. All this is doubtless well, and what our times require ; but let it be remembered, that

the largest provision of churches and ministrations, cannot effectually restore the days of the Reformation, and prevent Dissent; that the Church is not founded on material stones, or built up with material walls, but on Christ crucified, as the chief corner-stone, and with “lively stones” exhibiting her doctrines in living energy and power; that the soul of the Reformation is the doctrines of the Reformation; and that the *chief* defect of a Church, is not the want of churches or ministrations of worship, but the want of the doctrine of Christ crucified, to give that worship its proper light, and life, and blessing.

And now, Reverend Fathers in God, do I need an apology for the freedom of this address? If so, it must be found in the strong affection I bear to our Established Church. For forty-three years I have been one of her Ministers, however unworthy; for such I confess myself both to be, and to have been, especially from the ignorance with which I at first undertook the sacred functions of her ministry. Bred up in the daily observance of the Services of our Church, I had no idea of the Establishment but as a constituted portion of the State; nor had I any idea of worship probably, beyond that too common impression, that “prayers are morality, and kneeling is religion;” till the hour of holy intelligence arrived, when it pleased God by his Spirit, in my awakened apprehension, to inspire spirit into her letter, and meaning into her ceremonies of worship. I then

laboured under the too ordinary mistake, that real religion was to be found only among those who dissent from the Church, till by growing knowledge and experience, I was taught the injustice of this conclusion. It was Archbishop Usher or Bishop Hall I think, or their united influence on my mind, under God, who first induced a contrary conviction. I saw in them at once the religion of the Bible, and the character of Churchman united; and then studying with more diligence my own Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy, I was yet further led to behold the exquisitely Scriptural accuracy of her doctrines, and the heavenly simplicity and holy ardour expressed in her worship; while I was struck with the spiritual consistency of all her Services, implying decided holiness in all her worshippers, a demand which seemed but ill responded to by a large portion of those who attended her worship. I then inquired how this was managed by Dissent: and on turning to Dissenting Congregations, I learned that the demand of real membership was but imperfectly complied with in those who attended their worship; that the Dissenting Minister can no more command the holiness of his members, than the Minister of our Establishment; and that not unfrequently no small portion of their real members had been subtracted from the Church; thus effectually enriching their own Congregations by impoverishing those of the Church. I became therefore well content with our own Church; and



especially her effectual Parochial arrangement, by which every Minister became responsible for his local charge ; and becoming more familiar with the sentiments of the Reformers, I perceived that the Baptismal Service then sunk into neglect, and abuse, and home-administration, was the grand secret of forming our nascent Congregations. I sought therefore to carry it into effect, by inducing the decidedly holy of the Congregation to present their children at the font in the full congregation, and to become Sponsors to each other's children first, and then to extend their Christian kindness to the children of others who were destitute of the superintendence of pious Parents. It would ill become me to enlarge on this topic, but I should be wanting both to truth, to the admirable efficiency of our Baptismal Service, and to the wisdom and love of that Holy Spirit which I verily believe inspired our Reformers to institute, or rather to continue this blessed ordinance of our incipient Communion of Saints, if I did not declare the fact, that new sympathies were created, and new bonds of communion were provided, which realised the Communion of Saints, and exhibited a Church of England Congregation of no questionable character—which in the Church, during the administration of the Service, appeared by their responses and their prayers, to take a general interest in the Baptism ; and I doubt not, more especially between the Parties, that a closer Christian sympathy existed in private. From this blessed people I

was compelled by circumstances over which I had no control, to depart; and can only further declare, that in pursuing the same principle and practice in my present ministry, I find the same advantages to arise, in the degree in which I can bring them to bear: while my chief impediment arises not from cold and unintelligent orthodoxy, but from the prevalence of the disparaging spirit of half-toned Evangelism, which withholds its credit to the promise made by God to the children of the Church, by declining to take an active part in the Baptismal Service. Still I am not deterred, but convinced that a real Church of England Congregation in all its charities and graces, is under God to be promoted by this means alone, and aided by a few of similar sentiment; when, in extreme cases, no approved Sponsors are presented, my family and myself, volunteer our Services to the Church, and our God-children become the subjects of our more peculiar interest. But this never happens without a kind expostulation with the Congregation afterwards, from the pulpit, that no Christian charity has been found to render our assumption of the office unnecessary; as the Minister and his family, are in fact the Godfathers and Godmothers of all the children of the Parish, the Parochial Schools affording us for the most part the opportunity of inculcating divine truth on the infant mind. It is both wisdom and charity to accommodate ourselves to circumstances; and the just views of Baptismal privilege and disci-

pline, as held by our Church, have been so long in abeyance, that the Minister may well resort to such means as wisdom and charity may suggest, not indeed to introduce a new system, but to revive and recommend one, now obsolete, to the attention and acceptance of his people. In the degree then, Reverend Fathers in God, in which you interest yourselves as Bishops of the Reformation, as Cranmers, Ridleys, and Latimers, in recommending the principles and practices of the Reformation to the awakened notice of our modern Church, may we hope that real Church of England Congregations may arise, in which the true cramps and bearings of a spiritual communion may be found—the Sacramental sympathies of Baptism, as well as the Sacramental sympathies of the Lord's Supper, the almost sole Sacramental Communion now practically acknowledged in our Church. What cold, and meagre, and constrained attendance, compared with the large mass of nominal worshippers, is usually given to the latter of these Sacraments among us! Surely the reviving aid of the former is necessary, both to recover and increase our Sacramental Communion. Our Reformers sought to establish a complete Christian Communion by the united efficiency of both our Sacraments: and as you reintroduce to our notice the Reformers with the principles and practice of the Reformation as enforced by their private sentiments; so shall both Sacraments return under God in their due bearing, place, and

influence. The Reformers knew no Baptism but that of Infants, and therefore prepared no Service for Adults: that was a subsequent provision, to meet the evils which had been introduced by times of Anabaptist confusion. They had no idea of a Church, the membership of which was not constituted by Infant Baptism, and confirmed by the repeated Communion of the Lord's Supper. These godly men were too wise, too holy, and too honest, to place our Church-membership on a shadow, on the mere observance of a ceremony on one hand, or mere supposition and hypothesis on the other: they founded solid hopes on a solid foundation; even the original promise on which the Church was built, assured by renewed promises made to her under her respective several dispensations and sealed by successive Sacraments of stability and love. As a child of the Reformation then, for it is to the Church of the Reformation that I am indebted, under God, for my choicest blessings here, and all my hopes of glory hereafter, let me implore you to look favourably on this attempt to excite your attention, Reverend Fathers in God, to the demands and claims of the Church of the Reformation; by which justice may be done to our Church by equally accrediting both her Sacraments, and thus establishing the richest style of Church-membership ever yet known among us, —a communion of Saints which shall abash Infidelity, and Deism, and Liberalism into silent acquiescence; if it does not still more actively ope-

rate in inducing them to our support; and which shall swallow up all Dissent in the magnitude of the blessings it confers; blessings so great, so evident, and so general, that voluntary exclusion from them would be to bring the utmost misery on the Separatist himself, his family, his neighbours, his Country, and on Christendom at large.'

We ask then for the exercise of your functions, Venerable Fathers of our Episcopal Bench, both by your *charges*, and your official and personal influence, to recommend to your respective Dioceses that Reformation, of which you are the appointed Dispensers. Without the principles and practice of the Reformers, and men, at least in some measure formed after their model, and professing them as their examples, where shall any competent instruments of reformation be found? Were a Convocation summoned at this moment, to what portion of our Church could we look with any well-grounded hope of successful Reform? Of the two great Parties into which the Modern Church seems to be divided, Orthodoxy and Puseyism, (for I conceive them to be but different grades of the same kind,) on the one hand, and Evangelism on the other, on which can we justly fix our expectations? From what is known of the competency of either Party as Reformers, can we hope for any thing like a counterpart of our primitive Reformation? From what we have seen of Modern Evangelism, both from the hints of proposed reform it has already given,<sup>1</sup> and its stop-

<sup>1</sup> See p. clxxii.

ping short of the great principle of assurance, the very soul of all our services, as exemplified by the Reformers in those very services, and stated seriatim in the Seventeenth Article, the finished model of their sentiments of salvation by grace,—the great change, we may apprehend, under the name of Reform from them, would be, if not the consistent removal of that doctrine from all our intermediate services, at least the “mitigation” of the expressions of assurance, which give so much distaste in our initiatory Baptismal Service, when the child is received as a Member of the Church, to the final Burial Service, when his body is committed to the ground, “in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.” While from mere prejudiced, fashionable, and literal orthodoxy, if it understood its own principles so as to carry them out to their legitimate issue, in the baseless assumptions of Puseyism,<sup>1</sup> what less could we expect, than the removal of all those expressions which state man’s utter helplessness

1 Men are often appalled at the alarming nature of consequences seen at a distance, and they honestly admit the reality of the evil, while the intermediate links are concealed which connect these consequences with the principles they hold. The flaming volcano seen at a distance, may inspire the traveller with the just dread of approaching it, while he may not discover that the road on which he is proceeding, though its connexion is at present hid from his view by many a mountain and brake, leads directly to the burning crater, which, if his path be persisted in, may eventually engulf him.



by nature, and his salvation simply by grace, through faith in the divine promise; or, that, posed by the impossibility of retaining our Services in their skeleton state of nature, after being submitted to this “mitigating” process—Orthodoxy, in despair of reducing them to the grade of its own icy nature, should resort to the other feature of its character, moveless incumbency in things as they are, and imperturbable complacency with things constituted, merely because they are constituted, however sunk in corruption, and however rapidly hastening to decay: so that in fact we must be obliged to incompetency for forbearance, and to prejudice for security. Where then in the Church can we look for the agents of sound Protestant Reformation? Where shall the admirers of our first Reformation look for those, who may be the instruments of a second of similar wisdom, piety, truth, and blessing? Many among the people expect it,—many in the Church require it: and the State itself combined with the hierarchy of our church, in the lately-appointed Commission, seems engaged to effect it: but surely if ever the condition of our Church demanded humiliation and prayer, this is the moment, when on the one side it is said, “Reform *or* ruin;” and on the other, from the difficulty of discovering competent instruments of reform, awful apprehensions are entertained of “Reform *and* Ruin.”

For to whom could we with any security intrust the revision of our title-deeds of the Reformation,

our Articles, our Liturgy, and our Homilies? Archbishop Tillotson, and Bishops Burnet, and Patrick, and Lloyd, with several persons of their day, proposed in a new book of Homilies, to “examine<sup>1</sup> some expressions in the first book [of Homilies] that seemed to carry *Justification by faith only, to a height that wanted some mitigation.*” And if this great leading doctrine of the Reformation, the corner-stone of salvation by grace, as professed by our Church, in common with all the Churches of the Reformation, was then to have been brought into question, so as to have had its “height mitigated” by modern examination and revision; with what confidence could the Church at this day, commit these precious standards of her truth, to Divines of similar sentiments with those above mentioned? The unmitigated height of their doctrine, and the unmutilated sacredness of their letter, has for the last three centuries, under God, been the security and safeguard of the Established Church on one hand, and the source of her Evangelical revival on the other: and it requires but a small degree of prophetic foresight, to announce, that, if the tone of our doctrinal Articles and Homilies were at this day so to be “examined” as to be “mitigated;” short indeed would be the date of our Establish-

<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Burnet's “Essay towards a new book of Homilies, in seven Sermons, prepared at the desire of Archbishop Tillotson, and some other Bishops.” 8vo. 1713.

ment; for it would probably present a standard of doctrine not only unexemplified, but contradicted by our Liturgical worship; and like our School of divinity, would be composed of modern indistinctness, and vacillation of sentiment, which would defy the utmost ingenuity of human wit to reduce to an intelligible system.

Still, Reverend Fathers in God, Reform is required; and difficult as it is to answer the demand, can it safely be answered but by resorting to the Reform already provided for us, in the blessed principle and practice of our Reformation? If sound Reform is to take place, it is the conviction of many, that if it issued in its most favourable results, it would not exceed the blessedness of the Reformation already provided for us. Here then is our model, which might be submitted to consideration for more accommodating rubrics and circumstantials if necessary, but which, so far from accommodating its doctrines and principles to modern notions of the Gospel, and lowering its doctrinal standard to the *alleged* sentiments of any modern School, should be the model unmitigated and unviolated as the Scriptural title-deeds of our inheritance.

Neither does it appear that we can brook delay. Every Session that passes over us, seems to be a louder call upon us for Reform; as danger becomes imminent, opportunity becomes more valuable: and who shall say that it may not please God to deal with the Church as he has dealt with the

State? The gradually lowering condition of our Protestant Church having proportionably diminished the Protestant principle of the State, increasing corruption and abuse had from time to time induced louder and louder demands for Reform. Again and again, during our own times, had not only the demand been made, but God had given one favourable opportunity after another, which, as it ever is with those who are to be reformed, seemed no opportunity at all; thus evidently "stretching forth his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. x. 21. One case of extreme malignity succeeded another, and afforded most favourable opportunities of safe and gradual Reform. Still no Reform took place, till the Almighty closed the door of opportunity, and resumed the case into his own hand; declaring in his providence, "If you will not reform, I will." And while all the previous measures, relaxing the safeguards of our Protestant Constitution were gradually advancing during the years 1827, 1828, and 1829; in the next year the explosion of Reform took place, to which the previous measures necessarily led. Infatuated men belied their own principles; and deluded by an unprincipled and imposing expediency, became in God's overruling justice and wisdom, the instruments of producing that very Reform against which they had protested; and God taught us the humbling lesson, "Cease ye from man," by employing the same instrumentality to effect purposes apparently oppo-

site ; and showed how the same man might be strong in the field, and weak in the cabinet, and overthrow by his counsels, a Constitution consecrated by the wisdom and piety of ages, which he had been the means of preserving by his arms.

Bear with me, Reverend Fathers in God, I beseech you, while I propose to your consideration, these dealings of God with our rapidly unprotestantising State, as a warning to what the same holy God may be now doing with our once Protestant Church. I say once Protestant Church, for what man who compares the divinity of our Modern Church since the Restoration—the School of pre-requisite conditions in man, with the free grace of the pure Protestantism of the Reformation, will venture to affirm that they are the same ? Indeed the very attempt “to mitigate the height” of the doctrine of “Justification by faith only,” as stated in our Homilies, by the School of Tillotson as expressed above, affords but too ample proof, that the pure Protestant doctrine of the Reformation had then fallen into discredit ; and if any character may be given to times, in fact characterised by deficiency of religious character, the intervening space to the present hour, (if the tone of divinity as professed and circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge during the last hundred and forty years, may be accepted, as a standard) may be said to have exhibited the divinity of Tillotson and Nelson, which surely, no man who has compared them, will identify with

the pure Protestantism of the Articles of our Church. With this once purely Protestant Church, (at this hour, God be praised, purely Protestant in the great “unmitigated” authorised formularies of her professed principles of truth,) however lapsed in her doctrine and practice, may not a righteous God be even now dealing, as he has already dealt with our State? For more than a century past, holy men have been rising up in the Establishment, calling upon the Church for Reform. Bishop Burnet himself left an honest testimony of his zeal for Reform behind him in the conclusion of his “History of his own Time.” And the great Methodist movement which originated in the very heart of the Establishment, in four young men meeting together in a private chamber in Oxford, afterwards with the addition of a fifth,<sup>1</sup> branching out into the two great divisions of Methodism, has not only given the hint, but in spite of the opposition of the authorities of the Church, has for the most part, enforced a spiritual reform, exorbitant and irregular indeed, but still real and practical; which, had the Church but adopted, and improved as an auxiliary, might most opportunely “have lengthened her cords, and strengthened her stakes.” Isa. liv. 11. But this was weakly rejected; and now with strong professions of aiding the Church, which doubtless, with respect to many, are sincere, yet

<sup>1</sup> George Whitfield.



from the very circumstance of its separation, Methodism is practically and perseveringly acting for her overthrow, by the establishment of another powerful branch of Dissent. Add to this, the gradually increasing number of the Clergy of our Church, who, during the last half century have professed Evangelical principles, and become God's richest blessing to the Church as its Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, under the various grades of holiness, with which it pleased the Holy Spirit to invest them; being decidedly spiritual Ministers, approved by their success in producing decidedly spiritual Congregations, in which the great Associated Organs of Charity have originated; and by which they have been maintained, from the opening of the present century; communicating a regenerating impulse to our older Institutions which they have been unable to resist, or if still resisting, to which they must eventually surrender their abuses and their errors. Still, Reverend Fathers in God, it may be asked, has this actual Reform proceeded on any express principle or design either of the Church or State? Has their zeal for reformation kept pace with our just expectations or demands? Or have those opportunities of amendment been improved, which God in his mercy has long presented; and is at this moment presenting to us, by which a sound Reform might be effected and secured?

The times are evidently reforming times; and the readiness to reform has been now for ten years

the character both of the Legislature and the Government: and is it not both our wisdom and our duty to avail ourselves of such instruments and such opportunities as God in his providence has appointed, to carry measures of reform into effect? The very mode in which these instruments have been maintained in their stations seems to declare the design of God in still upholding their rule. A majority is obtained one day by two, and another by seven, and hopes are then excited that their sway is to cease. But surely the question should be asked, has the work been effected for which God has placed them in their station of power, and yet maintains them therein? It is the mischief of Party to regard men according to its own narrow interests and designs: it is the privilege of faith to regard men as instruments of God, and to inquire the purposes of their elevation or their fall. The six years of Edward the Sixth were days of Reformation soundly improved to the welfare of man, and the glory of God. The early days of James the First, and the Restoration of Charles the Second, might equally have been days of improved reformation, had equal instruments been found, or equal wisdom and piety to actuate them. The ambition of Northumberland was as truly opposed to the holy principles of Cranmer as the loose principles of modern Statesmen may be, to the honest designs of modern Reformers: still God had given times of Reform, whatever the moral character of the Rulers, and it was both Cranmer's

privilege and duty to avail himself of it. Two centuries nearly have elapsed from the Restoration, and it does not appear that such a season of Reform as the present, has been given to the Church. Can we consider it then otherwise, than as a season of awful responsibility? If improved by opportune and salutary Reform, the Established Church may still be a blessed Church, and the people a blessed Communion of Christian people; if neglected, and an unreforming Government returns, a destructive reaction may be the consequence, as it was at the Restoration, and abuses may multiply and corruptions increase, till the whole mass falls into ruin from mere decrepitude and inanition. And, O let it never be forgotten, that while “early reforms are boons conferred, and late reforms are concessions extorted” as to the people; so as to God, neglected opportunities may prove that we “do not like to retain God in our knowledge,” and he may give us “over to a reprobate mind,” Rom. i. 28. till the mandate goes forth “Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?” Luke xiii. 7.

But a Commission is appointed. For what purpose? Are its objects equal to our demands, or its powers proportioned to our necessities? Has it power to give stability to weakness, supply to deficiency, accommodation to difficulty, and renovation to decay? Has it power to consolidate two small populations into one, or to provide ministrations for our growing population in our overgrown

Vicarages especially? Has it power to provide special Ministers for our special need, Scripture Readers and Catechists, for our large populations, from utter despair of any adequate Collegiate supply, with a discretion to ordain them as Ministers over the scattered people they may be blessed in collecting into one Congregation? In a word, has it power to consider all the details of our deficient order and ministration, and to propose the necessary correctives? And above all, has it power to propose a sufficient agency to carry all proposed reforms into effect, by extending our Episcopal Government over such a portion of the Church as Episcopal sympathies may affect? A Bishop unfelt, is a Bishop known only in name; and if Episcopal Government is desirable, it is desirable up to its utmost available efficiency. If the Church is to be governed by Bishops, let the influence and virtue of their Government be felt. The reasons against their increase, I own, appear to be by no means satisfactory in themselves, but when compared with the necessity of their increase, to effect a real Reform, they are worse than nothing. Without Government there can be no order; and it is both unwise and unjust to appoint men to do, what no man's physical powers can possibly effect. If the Reformers in their day proposed eighteen new Bishops, surely the increase of our demands calls upon us to double our present number. Three hundred thousand persons under two hundred Ministers, with, as near as may be, fifteen hundred

people under each, will tax any one man's strength up to the utmost of its efficiency, however small the portion of territory may be, over which they lie. And as to the means of support, only let Episcopacy be felt, in the paternal increase of its blessings, and free vent be given to the awakened liberality of the Church, under the acknowledged influence of Episcopal sympathy, and means of receiving gratuitous contributions opened in each Cathedral Town; and not only might a sufficient fund be daily accumulating, for the supply of all the Ecclesiastical wants of the Diocese, including buildings and ministrations, but endowments also. It cannot be expected, that a transitory visit every three years for a few hours, within a circle far too large to receive a common interest, should be the means of producing any great degree of favourable feeling: but let the Bishop be resident in the centre of a manageable population, continually opening his house to all, but especially to the visits of his Clergy; and visiting their parsonages and churches in return; and like Bishop Hall of old,—what influence must not such a Bishop command; and perhaps like him, what persecution must not such a Bishop expect from the fashionable and the luke-warm? Happily, Reverend Fathers in God, your Bench is said not to be without example of this blessed intercourse in this our day: and assuredly, as it prevails, it cannot but command an irresistible interest in all who come within the influence of its power. But

no human effort seems to be equal to the full exhibition of this blessed example, overcharged with population, territory, and secularity as our Bishops now are.

In fine, Reverend Fathers in God, may I be permitted to submit to your most deliberate consideration, that it is a Protestant Church, which, under God, can alone form a Protestant State. If the reason be sought that the State is unprotestant, can any other be justly assigned than that the Church has become unprotestant. It is morally impossible to separate the State from the Church: whatever modern notions may assert, in this day of Separatist Divinity, and Infidel polity, so long as man is a moral agent, he must be susceptible of moral impression. He cannot speak or act, but he speaks and acts as a moral agent; and if he come in contact with Christian principle, it is utterly impossible for him, by the most perverse ingenuity, to exclude himself from the operation of its influence. A Christian example must influence his conduct in spite of himself: and a Christian principle admitted into his mind, cannot but operate conviction, however opposed that mind may be to its operation. As the Church therefore must necessarily influence the State, though they should both exist without any acknowledged connexion with each other, (which is in fact morally impossible, for we may as well exclude the operation of air on the lungs, as the operation of principle on the soul,) it is wise in



them both mutually to coalesce, and for the State to receive that progressive holiness from the Church, which, beginning with the three duties of the family circle, gradually expands itself to the Church, and from the Church necessarily and irresistibly affects the State: and it is as possible to prevent this necessary operation of the Church on the State, as it is to reverse that commandment of God, which in ordaining our relative obligations, begins them in the centre of the nursery, and gradually expands them, till it terminates our relative duties in the grand circumference of the State. To separate the Church from the State, is to do nothing less than to sheer the fifth commandment of its fifth relative obligation. If the duty of the child to the Parent be obligatory, it is but the just expansion of the same principle, that the subject obey the magistrate; they are equal instances of the same principle: and if the Church effect a lodgment in a private family, like "Paul in his own hired house—preaching the kingdom of God," Acts xxviii. 30, 31, till his "bonds in Christ are manifest in Cæsar's Court,"<sup>1</sup> it is the privilege, the duty, and the very nature of the true Church, never to cease its operation, till every Magistrate, and every Noble, and every Judge, and every Senator, and the whole civil and moral power of the Land, be made partakers of the holy influence of the Church; actuated by prophetic en-

<sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 13, Margin.

couragement on the one hand, "Thy people shall be all righteous," Isa. lx. 21, and "Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and their Queens thy nursing mothers;" Isa. xlix. 23. and warned by prophetic announcement on the other: "the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish." Isa. lx. 12. And if there be a national responsibility to God, there must be a national religion. The whole Scripture implies the same.

And if the necessary union between Church and State be no longer a question, can it be a question whether the moral character of the State is not dependent on that of the Church? A spiritual Hierarchy, and spiritual Ministers, and spiritual examples, and ministrations in the same, to all but to a devoted Land, must, under God, beget spiritual Kings and Queens, spiritual Nobles, and a spiritual people. In other words, a purely Protestant Church, with God's blessing upon the due application of her means of grace, may be expected to produce a purely Protestant State. Why then is, by universal confession, the State ceasing to be Protestant? I know no other answer that can honestly be given than this; because the Church has long been ceasing to be purely Protestant, both in its pulpit and in its practice.

But God be praised, the Church is still purely Protestant when viewed in the purity of her Reformation. Her foundation of Articles and Homilies is purely Protestant, her superstructure of worship in her Liturgy is purely Protestant:

and there want not living stones at this day, to prove that she is still a Protestant “Temple in the Lord.” Eph. ii. 21. Let us then but return to the pure Protestantism of our Reformation, still so largely exhibited in all our original formularies. Let us go back to our Reformers for their principles and practice, and by God’s forgiving mercy, the holy times of the Reformers shall return to us.

And can we hope for the correction of the endless perplexities of Dissent, but as Dissenters return to the Established Church? And can we hope that our Established Church will cordially open her bosom, to receive her stray children of Dissent, or that they will cordially return to her embrace, till the Church practically returns to the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of her Establishment; till, like a true Protestant mother, she feeds her children with “the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby?” 1 Peter ii. 2. for without the real word there is no nourishment; and without nourishment there is no growth. God grant us light and courage then to return to the Protestantism of the Reformation; and still we “shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.” Psalm cxviii. 17.

Nor will your labours, Reverend Fathers in God, be without hope: you have much to encourage you. Your Episcopal Order is still highly accredited by the people of England. Episcopacy is natural to our habits, and native to our feelings.

The great mass of our population still behold it with affection ; and scarcely do you address yourselves to any official function, that you are not received with marked respect and regard. The conduct of Dissent in our day, in uniting itself with Popery and Radicalism, to pull down the Church, and not to reform it, has both justified the prophecy of the Nonconformists as to the necessary effect of Independency, and proved to the awakened attention of the people, that the natural consequence of separation from a constituted order in the Church, is a necessary separation from a constituted order in the State : and the only sound means of amendment is, for Dissent to tread back its steps to the safeguard of the Church, and for the Church to tread back her steps to the purity of the Reformation. Let this be the great aim of your reformation ; and the admitted grandeur, and excellency, and charity of the design may, with God's blessing, arouse the attention of Dissent itself, and Dissenters may begin to perceive, that "after all is done," this is the only practicable mode of Church agreement. The admitted evil of Dissent, as it is wrought out at this day, in all its natural results, and the aroused attention of Dissent, both encourage you. And does not the very position of the Government, viewed apart from the littleness of Party, and its true character as an instrument of God, encourage you also ? Ten years since, on the one day, the political vane stood due south ; Reform. it

was said, was inexpedient, and was refused. On the next day it veered about, and stood due north; and Reform was not only expedient, but it rushed forth with the velocity of a tempest; and from that hour to this, two or three political flickerings excepted, the vane has stood due north for Reform, and even now stands so apparently, almost with the firmness of a fixture. The fact seems to be that the present instruments have not yet done the work of Reform, to which their Master has appointed them. It is for you, Reverend Fathers in God, perhaps, that they are waiting, in the inscrutable mercies of a gracious providence, that you may perform your work of Reform also. The gale of Reform is yet steadily blowing; and how many more Sessions of Constitutional relaxation, confounding Liberalism, and conceding Protestantism we may have to pass through, may depend on the industry with which you avail yourselves of passing opportunity. Only remember, I implore you, that opportunity must soon exhaust itself. If every succeeding Session is to be attended with increasing concession, and you still delay to reform the Church, every increasing concession must at length exhaust all the stores of our Constitution both in Church and State, and opportunity itself must be swallowed up in exhaustion: and what will then remain but regret for opportunity departed, unavailing remorse, and agonizing despair?

But if you are encouraged to hope on one hand, on the other it would be dishonest to conceal the

truth, that if you are to be the Reformers of the Sixteenth century, and your Reformation is to be conducted with their integrity, simplicity, disinterestedness, and unflinching devotion to their object, you must be prepared, Reverend Fathers in God, with the same faith and patience, and resolution to suffer, that they were. Like your great Master, you must set your "faces like a flint," (Isa. l. 7.) and be prepared calmly to endure the obloquy, the reproach, the mockery, the insult, the furious opposition, the perverse contradiction, the half-hearted support, and the clandestine counteraction of your families, Clergy, and your own Order, as they did.

If there be a condition on earth fraught with consummate usefulness and blessedness, it is that of a Bishop in the Church of Christ; like the angel of the Church of Smyrna, ruling over a holy and a blameless people. But then, who is sufficient for these things? If Paul sunk under the load of conscious incompetency, while he entered into the individual case of every person of his charge, "Who is offended and I burn not?" 2 Cor. x. 29. not one iota less oppressive is the weight incumbent on the Bishop of our modern Church. It may therefore be concluded, that he is the boldest, or the rashest of men, who will accept "the office of a Bishop." Poor indeed are the trappings of office, when considered as a compensation for the trammels of it. "This is "indeed" a true saying, If a man desire the



office of a Bishop he desireth a good work." 1 Tim. iii. 1. But then, he must seek it as "a good work," and as an eminent opportunity of benefiting man, and glorifying God. If he desires that first of all earthly offices of holy distinction for the purpose of personal ambition, political partisanship, reward of literary merit, or mode of family advancement, he is of all men the most rash, and the most miserable: and for this plain reason, because he has made the grandest mistake that man can make on this side eternity. He has made spiritual eminency the stepping-stone of earthly aggrandisement; and has brought unhallowed fire into the sanctuary of the Church. And how truly awful his condition! surrounded as he is by worldly wealth, a palace, a peerage, the most exalted title, and the highest rank as a man of earth; as a man of heaven he is utterly destitute of real Episcopal qualification, being carnal, unspiritual, and worldly. And surely his *misery* is as extreme as his *rashness*: for what misery is more extreme, than to be the daily victim of conscious incapacity; to be indebted to obscurity for protection, and to distance for security? To retire from official engagement for the very purpose of concealing his incompetency, and to sink down in a state of indifference and inanition as a refuge from the disclosure of his meanness, O this is God's righteous infliction, in the hour of his just anger, on the man, who from worldly motives of human ambition, thrusts himself unduly into offices

of distinction ; but more especially on the rash and miserable man, who seeks that noblest grade of spiritual distinction, where instead of decided holiness, and spiritual superiority, nothing more is provided to discharge the duties of his high office beyond the poor insufficiencies of mere nature—natural shrewdness, official tact, literary eminence, or the bustle and attachment of Party. How many a man who has shed tears of disappointment under his unsuccessful application for a mitre, might have shed tears of a more bitter character under the attainment of it ; and had he known the incumbrances of the office he was unequal to fill, might rather have rejoiced than repined at his failure !

But if the incapable Bishop may be esteemed the rashest of men, assuredly the capable Bishop is the boldest. Resigning the blessed independency of private life, the welcome engagement in Parochial duties, he must quit the retirement of private occupation for the new habits, connexions, and duties of a higher rank, to the requisitions of which he cannot be framed in a moment. He is in every respect a public man : the enlarged hospitalities of his Palace, the associated claims of his Cathedral in ordinations, weekly expositions, selection and due occupation of his Cathedral Clergy ; the demands of the Diocese, in knowing all his Clergy by familiarly visiting them, and as familiarly receiving their visits in return ; together with as familiar an acquaintance with their flocks,

as circumstances will permit; and lastly, the imperative demands of Parliamentary attendance, claiming the utmost vigilance to encourage religious and moral appeals from the holy and moral of the community; and to discourage and reject measures of an irreligious and immoral character, whether proposed by the political expediency of the Executive, or the crafty, clandestine, and reckless intrusions of individual selfishness,—all this requires a holy boldness, and an unwearied exercise of principle and power, to which few men are equal. In all these four departments of duty, to temper undaunted fortitude of decision, with the meekness and gentleness of Christian humility, requires the man, like Daniel, to live on his knees in public, and to suffer no fear of shame to deter him from the simple discharge of acknowledged duty. The persevering firmness which will stand forth in Parliament and protest against the immoralities of a beer-bill, or the Sabbath desecrations of a rail-road; or the holy fortitude which will attend the monthly meetings of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and will utter protest after protest, till his voice is heard in inducing the Meeting to exchange its tracts of the School of Modern Divinity either for those of the Reformation or its doctrines—all this demands the operation of the same principle and power, with which Latimer, and Ridley, and Cranmer, stood before their Judges at Oxford, or our Lord stood before Pilate at Jerusalem. Nothing short of the

unremitted refuge of prayer, and the constant exercise of grace, can maintain such a discharge of duty. It is a burthen to which nature is altogether unequal. It is easy to fly from this course of holy exertion, but it is not easy to maintain it. And what a relief must it be for the man of God to be permitted to retire from such a burthen as this, a burthen which no man can bear, but as the Holy Spirit "helps his infirmities." Rom. viii. 26. Well might Leighton retire from the toils and troubles of his Episcopate; well might Hooper groan under the double burthen of his two Dioceses, Worcester and Gloucester, and sigh daily for deliverance; well might Father Latimer leap for joy, when he felt himself disengaged from his rochet; and well might Bishop Hall, when, as he says, "The billows went so high, that I was three several times upon my knee to his majesty, to answer these great criminations"—plainly tell the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury [Laud] that rather than I would be obnoxious to those slanderous tongues of his mis-informers, I would cast up my rochet."<sup>1</sup> Yes, Reverend Fathers in God, that man, of living men I deem to be the boldest, whose patient fortitude can ride over "the high billows" of carnal opposition, party prejudice, jealous malignity, and perverse misconstruction, and calmly resigning himself to the course of Episcopal duty, can say, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto

<sup>1</sup> See "Some specialities in his Life," towards the end.

myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." Acts xx. 24.

And yet this portrait of a genuine Bishop of the Church of Christ, meanly drawn as it is, finds no unreal proto-type in the Bishops of our Reformation: and such must you also be, Reverend Fathers in God, if you are to be the honoured instruments of restoring the spirit of their Reformation to us. Nothing short of this holy fortitude can hope for the blessing of God, or suit the times in which we live. Who doubts after its repeated declarations of the same, that it is the avowed design of Popery and its associated Infidelity, Radicalism, and Liberalism, utterly to overthrow our Protestant Church and State: and though unconscious of the result we will hope, many within the fortress are proceeding by sap and mine to aid them in their design. Puseyism is only short of Popery, as superstition differs from rank idolatry; and Orthodoxy, the divinity of the Tillotson and Nelson School, exemplified and asserted as it is, by the prevailing doctrine of works, in a large majority of the tracts and works of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,<sup>1</sup> is only short of Puseyism, as congruity

<sup>1</sup> I own myself at a loss to account for the consistency of Evangelical Churchmen with respect to the above Society. They seem to confess that the character of the divinity circulated in a large proportion of its tracts, &c. is opposed to

and condignity are short of superstition. In Popery is gross idolatry, a wafer turned into a God; in Puseyism is an unintelligible presence of deity, to which is devoted an altar of superstition; and in Orthodoxy as represented by the above School, is the fitness of nature, and the worthiness of grace, which make man his own Saviour, and gradually prepare him for the superstition of

Scripture truth as expressed in the accredited formularies of our Church, and that the evil is wide-wasting and uncorrected. To which conclusion then are we to arrive? That their spiritual vision is not so acute as to permit them to discern the enormity of the mischief; or that their zeal is so cold, and their fortitude so relaxed, that they are content quietly to look on, and to wait for the issue? At such a moment, it may be poor consolation, that we have sat still and done nothing. Is it consistent either with zeal or charity, to permit our neighbour to proceed in error without once giving him warning; or so noble an instrument of efficient power as the Society is, to go on wasting a large portion of its powers, or worse than wasting, to abuse its powers in the active employment of those means, which can but counteract the professed purpose of its establishment? If they are already Members, why do they not unite with their Brethren in mild and permanent expostulation? If they are not Members, and feel for the character and usefulness of the Society; why do they not add themselves to it, and kindly direct the exercise of its powers to the more efficient attainment of its purposes? And what is become of the zeal of that part of the Evangelical periodical press, which, a few years since, could give the Society no rest, under its frequent appeals for correction? Where is the consistency of all this? The motto of the Christian Reformer, is Perseverance.



Puseyism. Thus the comparative grades of evil are, the congruity and condignity of works, leading the way to superstition; and superstition leading to Popish idolatry: and thus our once Protestant Church is going headlong to ruin; and by practically contradicting her own Articles, is the active agent of advancing her own destruction, and "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," with her golden cup in her hand, "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication," is smiling at the passive tranquillity of our approach; till completely drugged with her sorceries, all Protestant distinction ceases, and we sink unconscious victims, into the very snares we have laid for our own feet; to be aroused with the horrid sight, beheld by the Apostle only in vision, but by us in all the agonizing reality of an indisputable experience, "the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," regaling herself with our Protestant blood; when all our consolation will be, to "wonder with great admiration," like the rich man, "lifting up his eyes in hell" in surprise, at our own folly and sinfulness, in neglecting that standard of Protestant truth, for three centuries bestowed on us by a gracious God; the letter of which we subscribed with our hands, but the spirit of which we forsook in our pulpits, our Churches, and our lives.

Ten years have now elapsed, Reverend Fathers in God, since our Protestant barriers were re-

moved; and new principles both Civil and Ecclesiastical have been obtruded on us, and seem to be in the course of establishment among us. In the State, perseverance in evil seems to have begotten oblivion of former principles, and easy and habitual acquiescence in evil, whether it be from exhausted patience, sleepy unconcern, or defeated expectation: so that with the exception of a few, still reserving the privilege to think for themselves, Statesmen seem prepared to yield to one desolating measure after another, till the store of our Protestant privileges will be exhausted, before they are aware, from their impoverished stores, of their inability to concede further. And in the Church the monstrous production of Puseyism has arisen, in direct opposition to our Protestant Reformation. I give it the appellation of monstrous, for hitherto, however opposed Orthodoxy, under its several grades, may have been to the principles of our Reformation, it has ever had either the integrity, the decency, or the policy, to speak of our Reformers and of the Reformation, at least with becoming respect; but it was reserved for our day of waning Protestantism, to give birth to an *avowed opposition* to the Reformation, by both Clergy and Laity of that very Church which has been reformed. Reverend Fathers in God, this is unnatural, as unnatural as for the child to repudiate the Parent who has died for its benefit; and if the one is a monster in nature, surely the other is a monster in the Church. And if the last

ten years have been so prolific in novelties, what under the growing maturity of evil may not the next ten (if it be in the gracious purpose of an avenging God, yet to grant us such a season of forbearance) be expected to produce? Surely a man need be "no prophet, neither a prophet's son," Amos vii. 14. to adventure the prophecy, that if the next ten advance with the accelerated velocity of the past, with the increase of Popery and its associated mischiefs both without the Church and within it, "these having one mind shall give their power and strength unto the beast," and the present state of declining Protestantism<sup>1</sup> shall arrive at this issue;

<sup>1</sup> The following is extracted from the Translator's Preface to Dupin's "Ecclesiastical History of the seventeenth century." 'The decay of the Protestant religion may also be ascribed to other accidental causes. The House of Newburgh turned Protestants to procure assistance from the Spaniards; and now they have succeeded the Palatine family, they have ruined the Protestant Churches on the Rhine; and from protectors are turned implacable enemies to the Reformation. The Emperor has so rooted the Protestants out of Bohemia and Silesia, that there is hardly one family of them left in those countries: their Brethren in Hungary and Transylvania have had the same fate; and in Poland they are now in great danger of being wholly extirpated. In Swabia and Franconia the Catholics prevail most of late; the Electors of Cologne, and Bishops of Munster have worn out the Protestants in those parts; and their very name is almost extinct in France, the Spanish Low-Countries, Savoy and Piedmont.' Such was the account of Protestantism about one hundred and twenty years since:

“THESE SHALL MAKE WAR WITH THE LAMB,”<sup>1</sup>  
Rev. xvii. 13, 14.

Bear with me then, Reverend Fathers in God, in the repeated declaration, that without the restoration of the pure and Scripture-proof Protestantism of the Reformation, i. e. the vital, solid, and perfect Gospel of free grace, it is utterly vain to expect the restoration of England either in Church or State. As the Reformation revives so will England revive both in her Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitution. And hence we may not hesitate to declare, that the very worst symptom of our certain decline, is the Puseyite heresy, which in set terms, not only deprecates but reviles

and what redeeming character do we now behold in Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Prussia, or any other portion in Protestant Europe save some glimmerings in France and Switzerland, and as some think, perhaps with too favourable a decision, a considerable increase of Protestant truth in Great Britain? The following reflection of the Translator may not be inapposite both to Puseyite and Dissenter:— ‘To disorder and confound our Church, which, under God, is the grand support of the Reformation, is the folly of the Dissenter, and the interest of our Popish adversary.’ The whole Preface has a peculiar interest at the present awful moment when Popish Chapels, &c. amount to 522.

<sup>1</sup> The coarse invective in which the conductors of the Puseyite Periodicals have indulged themselves against the persons as well as sentiments of those who differ from them, savours but too strongly of the spirit of the mother of harlots, to permit those whom they oppose to relax their prayers for a moment, “that we, thy servants, being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks to thee in thy Holy Church.”

and traduces the Reformation ; which deliberately repudiates the great and blessed Authors of our Reformed Church ; and calmly passing by every single Father of the Reformation, shamelessly presents to our notice fifty-seven Authors of the two subsequent centuries, and imposes this unaccredited and heterogeneous mass of indifferent error and truth, as “ maintaining and inculcating the doctrines and discipline of the Anglican branch of the Catholic and Apostolic Church : ” for not one of these Authors had any thing to do with the Articles and Homilies of our Church, but to consent to, or subscribe them in approbation of their contents, as every Minister of our Establishment is required to do. A variety of mischiefs attacks the Church from without, and alas ! corruption of all kinds, both in doctrine and practice, is consuming her within ! but the accumulation of all these mischiefs is concentrated in this, which would purposely and advisedly destroy that, which is the remedy for all her corruptions—The Gospel truth of her Reformation. Like the reckless sinner who has broken every precept of the Law, whose desperation prompts him to consummate his mischief, by destroying the Gospel also, which is the remedy for his every breach of the Law ; this desperate effort of semi-popish recurrence, directs the ball to the heart, and in the suppression of this functionary of life, renders all remedy hopeless. For to impugn and to discredit the doctrine and practice of the Reformation, is utterly to quench the light

that has illuminated both Churchman and Dissenter for the last three centuries, and to involve all in Popish and Infidel darkness again.

Something more than two centuries and a half of idolatrous apostasy, condemned the rebellious kingdom of Israel to a dispersion even yet undiscovered. And, strictly speaking, as to the fact, if we date our spiritual decline from the latter years of Queen Elizabeth, two centuries and a half of declining Reformation may be completed in this our day; when our apostasy seems to have attained the zenith of its corruption. The distinction of evil seeming to be reserved for us, not in the return of Arianism or Socinianism; not in that of Deism or Infidelity, not even in that of Popery and all-confounding Liberalism; but in that distinction of malignant ingratitude which would not only dash the cup of proffered Reformation into the faces of those who present it, but would even fix them again to the stake of public reproach, and stigmatize them rather as corrupters than Restorers of the truth. This eminency of evil was reserved for the Puseyism of our day, a professed Protestant communion uniting with the Papacy to reproach the Reformation. There remains but another step; and when all the machinery of *salvation by works*, now so largely and efficiently worked by Churchmen themselves in the very centre of our Establishment, shall have had sufficient season to produce its effect, like a vessel from the stocks, our once gallant Establish-



ment shall be easily launched into the bosom of Popery. All things, Reverend Fathers in God, are in preparation for this event. We cannot remain as we are : one of two results must happen : our corruption must be either *corrected* or *avenged*. God in mercy open your eyes, and the eyes of the Church to our real condition, before these things come to pass.

And who is sanguine enough to hope under present appearances, measuring the probabilities of the future, with the certainties of the past, that if the principles and practices of our Protestant Reformation be not speedily resorted to, the next ten years shall not witness our constituted Protestant State, and our Established Protestant Church arrive at the same termination? It is a necessary, and the only safe conclusion therefore, that nothing but returning to the sound Evangelism of our pure Protestant Reformation, can, under God, preserve us.

We look over Christendom, and shall I say rejoice, or rather mourn over the professedly Christian Church. We believe that there is a Catholicism, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, and that this is the "Holy Catholic Church," really consisting of the "Communion of Saints." We survey the Greek Church, and, sunk as it is in corruption, we believe it to be still a Church; and that amidst the grossest darkness, there is here and there a ray of genuine grace, which maintains its real being as a Church; and

this is Evangelism, the real grace of the Spirit. We look at the Latin Church, spread more especially over this Western part of Europe; and though we see Antichrist "sitting in the temple of God," (1 Thess. ii. 4.) we give it still the name of a Church, not only because it is in the Church that he is to sit, but because we believe it still retains the real being of it, in the graces which, amidst the most appalling error and superstition, may yet be found in the heart-worship of many a pious nun or monk in his cell; and this is Evangelism or real Gospel grace. We look over the Reformed Churches, and all that bears the name of Protestantism; and amidst the Pelagianism, and Semi-pelagianism, and Arianism, and Socinianism, and Neologianism, and Deism, and Atheism, with which they abound, we yet discover traces of the genuine grace of their original Institution: and this grace is Evangelism, the essential power of the Gospel. We look at the section of Protestantism as exhibited by our Established Church, and while we survey the profession of Orthodoxy, we see, amidst its ceremonious regards, and external observances, and professed salvation by works and conditions, that there is a happy inconsistency not unfrequently found between the head and the heart; and that there are "such as feel in themselves the workings of the spirit of Christ," expressing itself in faithful prayer, which practically rejects every other confidence, but that in the blood and merits of the Saviour; and this is real Evangelism,

the genuine grace of the Gospel. We look at Puseyism; and while we can connect no salvation with sight and sense put for faith, the letter for the spirit, the form for the essence, superstition for piety, a fancied presence of Deity apprehended by superstition, substituted for the full consolations of the promise, as apprehended in the Sacraments by faith; we may yet discover, as in Popery, that, in some there is yet real faith in Christ, under all this confusion of error: and this faith is Evangelism, the genuine grace of the Gospel. We may look also at the various sections of multiform Dissent, and while we condemn its errors and its heresies, its insubordination and its separation, both as to Church and State, we may hail with pleasure the existence of real piety and grace: and this grace is Evangelism, the real power of the Gospel.

Here is one vein of heavenly virtue, one spark of celestial fire, one stream of real grace, the pure Evangelism of the Gospel, that forms the grand conservative power by which all these Churches remain still in being. It is not Greek Catholicism, nor Roman Catholicism, nor Protestant Catholicism, nor Established nor Dissenting Catholicism, but it is that pure Evangelical Catholicism, the peculiar privilege of that "remnant" in every professing Church which "shall be saved."<sup>1</sup> It is not their

<sup>1</sup> It is our commission as Ministers of the Establishment, "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world,

profession, nor their form, nor their Establishment, nor their name, much less the trash, and refuse, and error, and heresy, by which they may be respectively distinguished; no, this is “the wood, and hay, and stubble,” which characterises “Israel after the flesh;” the utter worthlessness of which shall “be revealed by fire,” and be consumed; it is the “gold, and silver, and precious stones,” built upon this foundation—Jesus Christ, (1 Cor. iii. 11—13.) which constitutes “the Israel of God,” the true Communion of Saints, and which shall alone remain, the imperishable treasure of truth, as it is the vital essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Evangelism then, and Evangelism alone, is the great conservative power, the essential virtue of the Church, which is the solid evidence of its being. And you are Bishops, Reverend Fathers in God, not as you are Peers, or dwell in Palaces, or preside over Cathedrals, or superintend Dioceses; not as you are consecrated to ordain Ministers, or are entitled “Reverend Fathers in God,” much less as you are Scholars, or Gentlemen invested with official distinction, or endued with official capacity; but as you are Evangelists. You are Hierarchs, as you are Evangelists; for real Hierarchy is Evangelical

that they may be saved through Christ for ever;” and it is our duty and privilege, by the preached Gospel, to call out that Communion of Saints, which constitutes the essential virtue of every Church, of which the Holy Catholic Church consists. Doubtless in all Churches however dark, there is a saving ministry for a people to be saved.

rule. The true Church is that Evangelical body, which is chosen by the love of God, and bought by the blood, justified by the merits, and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Your rule as Bishops is an Evangelical rule, and our obedience as the Church is an Evangelical obedience; Evangelism is the true being of the Church; without this spiritual being it is in fact no Church, it has only a name that it lives, and is dead. And the weakest Evangelist, he who has but just heard the spiritual call, and has obeyed it, both constitutes the true Church and maintains it, and is worthy of your patronage and support.

The conclusion then seems to be inevitable; as you, Reverend Fathers in God, are Evangelical Bishops, ruling over an Evangelical Church, encouraging Evangelical principles, such as those of our Reformation are, ordaining Evangelical Ministers, preferring Evangelical men, and by your prayers, and piety, and godly conversation in Christ, maintaining an Evangelical Church, in that very degree shall all our difficulties both in Church and State be relieved: the Church shall resume her graces, and the State shall resume its due influence and order. For it is Evangelism, and Evangelism alone that is both Restorative and Conservative power.

You “sit,” Reverend Fathers in God, “in Moses seat.” Matt. xxiii. 2. You occupy the station of Cranmer, and Ridley, and Latimer, and Hooper, and Jewell, even of “those reverend Fa-

thers and great Divines in the days of King Edward the Sixth." They originated the Reformation and established it; and as Clergymen and Laymen of our Protestant Church we are entitled to look to you, at least for the preservation of its pure and Biblical truths. To you we look under our present difficulties, as to men that from their station have "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." 1 Chron. xii. 32. "It is required in stewards that they be found faithful;" 1 Cor. iv. 2: and to your faithfulness, Reverend Fathers in God, are the great truths and blessings of our Protestant Reformation especially committed. Archbishop Laud was not faithful to the doctrines of the Reformation, when he discountenanced the preaching of the seventeenth Article.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Beveridge was not faithful to the doctrines of the Reformation, when, in his exposition of the same Article, he omitted the literal explanation of its first clause, declaring, "And now that I am unavoidably fallen upon it, I shall speak as little as possibly I can unto it." It is better not to speak at all, than not to speak fully and plainly. Bishop Burnet was not faithful to the doctrines of the Reformation, when he made the seventeenth Article a nose of wax, to be twisted four several ways, at the pleasure of the Reader, while a simple explanation of the letter would at once have decided the sense: and when he forsook the simple exposition of the

<sup>1</sup> See page 41<sup>3</sup>, note.



Articles from the ninth to the seventeenth.<sup>1</sup> The Author of the "Whole Duty of Man," and all his cotemporary Bishops and Divines, who recommended the book to the notice of the Church, were not faithful to the doctrines of the Reformation, inasmuch as they expressly contradicted the Articles and Homilies of the Church. Archbishop Tillotson and all his School, who, in addi-

<sup>1</sup> I say "forsook;" for he gives a literal exposition of the first eight Articles, but when he arrives at the ninth, "on original or birth sin," he at once changes his manner, and instead of giving the literal exposition as before, proceeds to "set down the different opinions in this point, with that true indifference," says he, "that I intend to observe on such other occasions, and which becomes one who undertakes to explain the doctrines of the Church, and not his own: and who is obliged to propose other men's opinions with all sincerity, and to show what are the senses that the learned men of different persuasions in these matters, have put on the words of the Article." But surely it is our concern to ascertain "the literal and grammatical sense" of the Article, that we may know what "the opinions" of the Church are, the Articles of which we subscribe, and not "the senses that the learned men of different persuasions have put on them." This is, in fact to exercise the very spirit of Modern Liberalism. And I cannot but consider Bishop Burnet, in this Exposition, as the real Patron of the School of Ecclesiastical Liberalism, really encouraging every man to impose his own sense on the Article. Apply this principle of interpretation to the Scripture, and any text may be turned to any meaning that human ingenuity may please to impose upon it, till even with Bishop Tomline, we write *benefits* for *benefit*. For his is the opinion of "a learned man."

tion to the above work, also recommended Nelson's divinity to the Church, were not faithful to the doctrines of the Reformation, as they in addition to their recommendation of the above, expressly declare, in avowing it to be their object to lower the doctrine of justification. And where shall we find among the Bishops and Divines of the eighteenth century plain statements of doctrine, exhibiting or confirming the Evangelical doctrines which are defined for us and our posterity from the ninth to the seventeenth Article? And if we do find a few such writers during that long interval, has it not been the general fashion either to pass them by in silence, or rather to denounce them as dangerous exceptions, than to propose them as models to our imitation.

And shall a false modesty detain us at the threshold of the nineteenth century? if so, as to any purpose of reformation our whole statement must be vain. Bishop Tomline was not faithful to the doctrine of the Reformation, when he perverted the election mentioned in the seventeenth Article as "so excellent a *benefit* of God," "into the *benefits* of the gospel dispensation," of which "they are made partakers, who conform to the conditions" of it: thus at once perverting the letter of the Article, and clogging that Gospel with conditions, the very privilege of which to the elect is, that it is a Gospel without conditions.

But we may here well be spared the invidious distinction of particular names, and for the last

forty years, take the divinity circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge as the model of the divinity of the Establishment during nearly the first half of this century. The Society itself says, that it “will not give up those principles of sound doctrine which it has so long maintained.”<sup>1</sup> We ask what the criterion of this “sound doctrine” is? The Church of England knows but one criterion, which is that of her accredited Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy: will it be asserted that the tracts and books circulated by the Society, either during her first hundred, or her last forty years, have ever been compared with this authorised standard, and, as approved by it, that those tracts have been circulated accordingly? Or will it be asserted that the Homilies have been printed and recommended for circulation by the Society before the year 1812; or that, the doctrines of the Reformation either in its Reports or its annual sermons have been recommended by it to notice? Where during the last two centuries and a half either in Bishop’s *charges*, or in any official manner, do we find the doctrines of the Reformation expressly brought forward for the pulpit or Congregation? Instances may be given in the early part of this season perhaps; but since the Restoration, few indeed must be the instances that can be produced. At the opening of the 17th century the purity of our Pro-

<sup>1</sup> See Report for 1836, p. 19, line 11.

testant Church but too evidently began to decline ; and the last two centuries and a half, till within the last half century of partial revival, have witnessed its proportionable decline, till the practical negligence of the doctrines and principles of the Reformation has in God's righteous judgment given us to see the due issue of the doctrine of salvation by *works*, instead of the Reformation doctrine of salvation by *faith*. The fact no man can deny, that universal Liberalism has prevailed, Christian Liberalism within the Church, and Infidel Liberalism without it, which mocks at Revelation as truth, the combined efficacy of which is rapidly preparing us for Infidelity and Popery again. So far is the Orthodoxy of the Nelson and Tillotson School from resisting our return to Popery, that being founded on works, it contains the very seeds of Popery within it; and by first preparing the people for Puseyism, it ultimately paves the way for the universal prevalence of Popery among us: and the Evangelisin, or salvation by grace which is to present an effectual barrier to its success, must, I apprehend, be of a higher tone, and of a larger extent in our pulpits and Congregations, before any well-grounded hope can be cherished, that Protestant ascendancy can be maintained. We have sown the wind ; God Almighty interpose in mercy, and grant that we "reap not the whirlwind." Hos. viii. 7. Two centuries and a half of declining Protestantism have gone over us, and we are now arriving at its issue.

Causes have necessarily produced their effects. An unprotestantised Church is producing a rapidly unprotestantising State. And is there no remedy? There is. Let the Church go back to her Reformation, and the State may yet go back to Reform: it is Reformation which includes Reform. For a purely Protestant Church must necessarily, under God, produce a purely Protestant State. Shall I sum up the remedy then in one word?

#### REFORMATION OR RUIN!

May I be permitted to add in plain terms, that the spirit of hostility and exclusion with which Evangelism at the different seasons of its appearance, has been treated by a large portion of the higher Powers in our Establishment, under the reproach of enthusiasm, if persisted in, can result in nothing short of the overthrow of our Established Church. Why is the Church Missionary Society, and other Societies mainly supported by Evangelical Churchmen, not patronized by all the Bench of Bishops? Is it the intention to banish Evangelism from the Church; and to abide the desperate venture of another St. Bartholomew's day? Forms, caremonies, churches, and Establishments may be multiplied without end, but amidst the crash of Institutions which marks the present day, and threatens all that is constituted with overthrow, like the river "the streams whereof make glad the city of God," Ps. xlv. 4. amidst the confusion of the elements, *Evangelism alone is Conservatism*. It is erroneous doctrine

that has brought the Church of England to its present brink of ruin, and it is the same evil if persisted in, that will accomplish its ruin. And our infatuation is of no common character, if we do not see the Papists encouraging one another, and with malignant gratulation rejoicing over our ignorance and blindness; "Let them alone; they are but playing our game; for so long as they preach our doctrines, they are but building churches for us." Evangelism alone is essential truth; and where this is not, error and corruption are, and without reformation, certain destruction.

If this address, Reverend Fathers in God, should seem to express too warm a zeal, pardon, I beseech you the warmth of the zeal, in the warmth of the affection which has inspired it. I love the Constitution of my Country both in Church and State: and both my admiration and my gratitude claim the devotion of all my powers in their support. I was at my birth enfeoffed, as every Englishman was, with a two-fold birth-right; a Protestant State and a Protestant Church. My Lords, I ask your Lordships, as Peers of Parliament, to restore me, and those who feel with me, our Protestant State; but this I am well convinced, Reverend Fathers in God, you cannot do, till you first restore us our Protestant Church, renewed in all the active principle, and corresponding practice of our Protestant Reformation. This, Reverend Fathers in God, as Bishops, the chief Pastors and Ministers of our Church, as *instruments*, you *can* do; I



had almost said, this, as *instruments*, you *alone* can do; for in addition to your Diocesan patronage, you are, as Ordaining Ministers, the sole and universal Patrons of the Church: on you, and on you only, as Instruments does the admission of the Clergy rest: on you then as Bishops, under God, does the salvation of the Country depend. If you are either selfish, or careless in your ordination or preferment, so will both Church and State correspondingly suffer: if you set up Evangelism, and Evangelical Ministers, as the butt of your reproach, rather than the objects of your selection, as has, at least, been done by too many of your predecessors in office, we shall not have far to go for the corruption of the Church; and in that of the Church, for the corruption of the State. For if “the salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be salted?” Matt. v. 13.

I speak honestly, for I speak the unreserved sentiments of my mind. I speak plainly, for I speak to save. I can have but little personal interest in these things; for the term of my lease is nearly exhausted: but as I have received them in trust from my forefathers, I would transmit them to my posterity, not only as conserved but improved. My children claim from me a Protestant State and a Protestant Church; I would fain answer their demand by at least an unimpaired transmission of the same: and my spiritual children seem to require of me a Protestant pulpit, of Evangelical power and virtue, when my feeble

efforts to fill the same shall have ceased. Weak as my apprehension is of “the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God,” and poor as my ministration of it is, it is still too lovely and too unequivocally excellent in its effects, for me not to feel deeply desirous to secure it to my beloved people and to my Country when I am gone. And I know no one assurance that would more gratify my soul, before it quits this body of sin and death, than that a renewal of our Primitive Reformation were indeed begun, and that other Cranmers, Latimers, and Riddleys, were arising in our Church, who under God, gave favourable hope that such a Reformation might flourish under their hands. For nearly forty years of my ministry, have I lived under growing prayers and hopes of this desirable restoration; and during the larger portion of that season, has it been my unfailing effort to re-introduce the principles of the Reformers, the Baptismal privileges of their Reformation, and their works and sentiments to the awakened attention of our Church and Country: and to correct the School of lapsed Reformation, the School of works and conditions, as it has corrupted the Church since the Restoration, and still corrupts it in the fashionable orthodoxy of this our day, by the free grace and unconditional promise of the Gospel of our Primitive Reformation. Nor have my prayers been silent for your sacred Bench, Reverend Fathers in God, that it would please God to make you “able ministers of Christ, and faithful stewards of the

mysteries of God." 1 Cor. iv. 1. For I am well convinced, that, without prayer, it is vain to expect "Bishops illuminated with true knowledge and understanding of the word;" and without this spiritual illumination, they must be either erroneous or "unpreaching prelates," incapable "both by their preaching and living, to set it forth and shew it accordingly." May God in mercy pour out a spirit of prayer and supplication on his Church, especially for you, Reverend Fathers in God, that you may be endued "with power from on high," (Luke xxiv. 49.) equal to your day of peril and trial; that you may be led to a sound renewed Reformation of our Established Church, a Reformation not merely of improved Bishoprics, multiplied churches, increased ministrations, and all the external provision and array of an outward tabernacle however exquisite in its proportions, or attractive in its splendour, but a Church distinguished by the heavenly spirituality of its worship—a table of shew bread representing spiritual worshippers; an altar of incense denoting the effectual intercession of a mediating Saviour; and a candlestick of unextinguishable light, intimating that divine illumination of the Spirit, without which no worship can be holy. These are the constituents of the true Church of Christ. You may have the most splendid sanctuary of outward pomp, and Established magnificence; but the sanctuary is an empty external, without the three great spiritual realities of a Church; a really

worshipping people, a Saviour of all-prevalent intercession, and a Holy Spirit, inspiring a spiritual worship, and diffusing love, and joy, and peace, and gratitude, and blessing, and praise, in all its diversified holiness around.

May such be the blessed Church, over which "He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand," (Rev. ii. 1.) in his providence has called you to rule, Reverend Fathers in God, prays most fervently and sincerely, in all bounden duty and faithfulness,

Your unworthy but attached

Brother and Servant

In the ministry of Jesus Christ,

HENRY BUDD.

*Rectory, White Roothing,*

*Dec. 18, 1840.*

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I sum up the spirit of this volume in

#### THE BELIEVING PARENT'S PRAYER.

O EVER GRACIOUS and ever-blessed Lord God, what rich and precious promises hast thou given to faithful Parents for their encouragement! "The just man walketh in his integrity, his children are blessed after him." "The righteous is ever merciful

and lendeth, and his seed is blessed." And how hast thou confirmed these promises, gracious Saviour, in thy kind expostulation to suffer little children to come to thee, for of such is the kingdom of God. We are plainly taught by thee that the seed of faithful parentage is holy from the very birth. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." O my God, weak as I am, and anxious as I am as a Parent, how do I bless thee that thou hast thus encouraged me to cast my dear burden on the Lord, and to undertake the education of my child, not in my own strength but in thine. Most willingly, O Lord, most cheerfully, and with a grateful sense of thy love, do I accept thy covenanted mercies for me and for my Child. O grant me grace to follow the footsteps of the Father of the Faithful, and of his faithful children. Thou gavest him a promise that his seed should serve thee, and as the seal of that promise, thou gavest him the covenant of circumcision; and so in dependence on this promise Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and the Patriarchs acted with the like faith, for Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve Patriarchs; and depending with the like faith on thy promise, thy Church has ever had a holy seed, and has a holy seed at this hour. O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, thou God

in covenant, bless me thy servant, grant me the like faith in thy promise, that I also may be blessed with a holy seed, and transmit it to the latest times of thy Church. With Jacob may my children also be those which thou hast “*graciously* given thy servant :” teach me with Manoah of old, “ how I shall order the Child, and how I shall do unto *him* :” give me patience and forbearance in *his* education, that I may by my example, and watchfulness, and steady self-denial and prayer, be blessed in forming *him* to virtuous habits, so that we may train *him* up in the way that he should go ; and though after many prayers offered, and many years spent in holy discipline, “ my house ” should “ not be so with God ” as my heart most earnestly desires, and although thou make not thy promise “ to grow ” in my perception of the gracious habits of my Child, yet let not my faith fail, but let me ever plead thy promise, and remember that thou hast “ made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure ; ” and that thou art “ the faithful God which keepest covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.” Still, gracious God, uphold a Parent’s faith. Let me never forget that “ the things which are revealed belong to us, and to our children for ever.” Thou hast revealed thy promises for the encouragement of faithful Parents, and thou hast sealed them to me and to my child by baptism, as thou didst to Abraham and his chil-



dren by circumcision; grant me then a firm and unfailing faith to apply these promises to myself and to my child. May I live upon them daily, and act upon them daily; and as thou enablest me to honour thy free grace in the education of my children, so honour my weak exertions, O Lord, with success, that "all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Put thy Spirit, Lord, into my soul, and thy words of promise into my mouth, and may this be thy covenant with me and mine. "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever:" grant this, O Lord, I beseech thee, for our everlasting blessing, and the everlasting praise of thy grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* The Author would have been better satisfied, could he have avoided employing the terms "Puseyism," the "Tillotson and Nelson School," &c. but these generick terms were necessary for brevity's sake to avoid circumlocution. The Masters of particular Schools, and the Patrons of heresies and errors have ever had them designated by their names according to the practice both of the Church and the Scriptures; and it is a false charity which would improve upon them.

<sup>1</sup> The Sponsor's Prayer is given in Budd's "Helps" &c. No. VI.; and the Child's Prayers in Nos. VI. and VII.

## LETTER I.

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE PRESENT RELAXED OBSERVANCE OF BAPTISMAL DUTIES AND OB- LIGATIONS.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You asked me some time since, for a statement of my sentiments, on the subject of Infant-baptism, as administered by our Church; and on putting into your hands a paper which I had drawn up on that subject, you returned it to me, with a wish to ‘ see it in print, in a more enlarged form.’

Urged by your request, and encouraged by your judgment, I cheerfully cast my mite into the treasury of those benevolent exertions which are intended to compose our differences, and to bring us to that “ Communion of saints,” in which I con-

ceive, it is the great object of our Church in all her formularies to unite her children.

It is but too evident then, that men may “ profess and call themselves Christians,” without being effectually led into the way of truth.” They may therefore be formally admitted into the membership of “ the Holy Catholic Church ;” but they may still have no fellowship with the saints in spirit, having no spiritual communion with Christ, the vital Head of his spiritual body. Since it is from Him that that genuine spirituality proceeds, which combines every real member of this Communion in one holy society, and unites and incorporates both Him “ that sanctifieth ” and them that “ are sanctified ” all “ in one.” Heb. ii. 11. “ The mystical union between Christ and his Church,” says Bishop Pearson, “ the spiritual conjunction of the members to the Head, is the true foundation of that communion which one member hath with another, all the members living and increasing by the same influence which they receive from Him.”<sup>1</sup> Without a previous communion with Christ then, there can be no real spiritual communion with each other.

Hence it is but too clear that admission into “ the Holy Catholic Church ” by any external rite, and a partaking of “ the Communion of the saints,” differ as truly as a mere profession does from a sincere and indisputable reality. The one

<sup>1</sup> On the Creed, Article ix. p. 357.

bears the name, the other possesses the Spirit of Christ: the one enters the door, but proceeds no further; the other ranges through all the delightful apartments of the mansion, and enjoys all the privileges of a child of the family. "There were not hypocrites among the Jews alone; but in the Church of Christ many cry, "Lord, Lord," whom he knoweth not. The tares have the privilege of the field, as well as the wheat; and the bad fish of the net as well as the good. The saints have communion with hypocrites in all things with which the distinction of a saint and a hypocrite can consist. They communicate in the same water, both externally baptised alike; they communicate in the same creed, both make the same open profession of faith, both agree in the acknowledgment of the same principles of religion; they communicate in the same word, both hear the same doctrine preached; they communicate at the same table, both eat the same bread and drink the wine, which Christ hath appointed to be received; but the hypocrite doth not communicate with the saint in the same saving grace, in the same true faith working by love, and in the same renovation of mind and spirit; for then he were not a hypocrite, but a saint. A saint doth not communicate with the hypocrite, in the same sins, in the same lurking infidelity, in the same unfruitfulness under the means of grace, in the same false pretence and empty form of godliness; for then he were not a saint, but a hypocrite. Thus the

saints may communicate with the wicked, so they communicate not with their wickedness; and may have fellowship with sinners, so they have no fellowship with that which makes them such, that is, their sins.”<sup>1</sup> And by parity of reasoning, hypocrites, i. e. mere formal professors may openly and apparently communicate with the saints, but they can have no fellowship with their holiness, no communion with their graces. The Pharisee and the publican may both go up to the same temple, but the pride of the one can have no communion with the humility of the other: nor can characters so dissimilar hold the same Head, derive grace from the same source, or be influenced by the same Spirit.

As Bishop Pearson’s name is deservedly venerable, and his work on the Creed is considered as a standard book, I appeal again to his authority, on this question. The following is the third reason he gives for believing the Church of Christ to be holy. “It is necessary to believe the Church of Christ to be holy, lest we should presume to obtain any happiness *by being of it*, without that holiness which is required *in it*. It is enough that the end, institution, and administration of the Church are holy; but that there may be some real and permanent advantage received by it, it is necessary that the *persons abiding in the communion of it should be really and effectually sanctified*. Without which holiness, the privileges of

<sup>1</sup> On the Creed, Article ix. p. 356.

the Church prove the greatest disadvantages; and the means of salvation neglected, tend to a punishment with aggravation. It is not only vain but pernicious to attend at the marriage feast, without a wedding garment; and it is our Saviour's description of folly, to cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," while we are without oil in our lamps. We must acknowledge a necessity of holiness, when we confess that Church alone which is holy can make us happy.<sup>1</sup>

Here, according to the Bishop, it is presumption to think of obtaining any happiness by being *of* the Church, without obtaining that holiness which is required *in* it. "The persons abiding in the communion of it should be really and effectually sanctified." Nay he goes so far as to say, that profession without reality will prove the greatest disadvantage, and be productive of aggravated punishment. The assertion then, that "admission into the Holy Catholic Church," by the external rite of Baptism, is that internal regeneration of the heart which evidences our union with "the Communion of saints," only needs a plain statement of terms to prove its fallacy. External admission into "the Holy Catholic Church" by the rite of water-baptism, is but part of the Sacrament, "the outward visible sign:" it is the Baptism of the Spirit, "the inward and spiritual grace" of which the water is the emblem, the means, and

<sup>1</sup> Art. ix. 350.



the pledge, that constitutes that holiness, which evidences our title to "the Communion of the saints," and makes the Sacrament complete.

But is it not to be expected that this very mistake should have arisen in the Church? So long as the mere natural man may be the subject of the outward dispensation, he must be expected to confound external things with things spiritual. "The natural man," however distinguished by talents or acquirements, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." 1 Cor. ii. 14. He cannot rise above his level; which is to look "at the outward appearance:" he is a creature of sense, and sight, and reason, and can comprehend the things which are obvious to those faculties; but not having the super-added faculty of faith, he cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit, which faith alone can discern. Hence he necessarily confounds the outward act with the inward grace—the sign with the thing signified—the water with the Spirit—the professing "Holy Catholic Church," with the spiritual "Communion of the saints;" and thus confounding circumstances with essentials, all the mischiefs of delusion follow; and the Christian body, thus feeding on wind instead of wholesome nutriment, is starved, and faints, and decays.

That this is not a speculative mischief merely, is but too evident from the relaxed estimation of this privilege of Baptism, throughout the professing Christian world. Is it not much to be feared,

that, in most cases, none of the parties engaged in the rite, seem to expect any spiritual advantages to flow from it? Are they not commonly content with the mere observance? Are they not satisfied that the ceremony should have been performed, without caring for the privileges which the promise imparts to the baptised? Do not Parents usually compliment away all hope of spiritual benefit to the baptised, in selecting for Sponsors, those who are related to them in nature, by the ties of friendship, or those from whose rank or wealth they encourage expectations of temporal aggrandisement for their children? Are not Sponsors usually quite reckless of the spiritual character of "the young Christian?" Is not the Child, as he increases in years and knowledge, educated in complete indifference to his Baptismal privileges and obligations? and does the Church feel any interest in the baptised, as belonging to the "Communion of the saints?" Are any of these parties anxious to secure to the Child the most glorious and important privileges of being "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," by training him up in a constant sense of his obligations to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, effectually to "believe the articles of the Christian faith," and to "keep God's holy will and commandments;" and heartily to thank his Heavenly Father, that he hath called him to so blessed a state of salvation, and that it should be the object of his fervent prayers that he may

have grace to walk in the same all the days of his life? Alas! My dear Friend, how many of us have either been the victims of this delusion of mistaking the sign for the thing signified, in our education from childhood; or have contributed to the confirmation of the same, by undertaking the office of Sponsors for others, to whom we have paid no attention after the ceremony of Baptism had been performed.

I confess that this prevailing error, in the very outset of our professing Christian course, appears to me to be the fruitful source of both the loose profession, and the fickle attachment to our Established Church, which has been so much and so feelingly lamented. If Baptism be no more than a sign, a sign is no more than a form, and a form is easily satisfied by a mere profession: and if it admit us into nothing more than the name of the Church, without uniting us to the privileges, and sympathies, and spiritual fellowship which form the essential realities of "the Communion of saints," how can we hope for attachment to that which is merely nominal, and with which no perception of spiritual blessings is connected. Viewed as Baptism usually is, how can profession be otherwise than loose, and attachment otherwise than fickle. Solid attachment to an object arises from a sense of its loveliness, its excellence, or from our experience of the blessings we derive from it: but where these are not perceived or felt, attachment cannot be otherwise than fickle; it rests on no

solid basis, and is the sport of every error that may assail it.

And is not this fundamental error the mighty mischief which is now desolating our Church? All the evils that have ever been ascribed to the doctrines of grace, with all their perversions, and all their misapprehensions, must sink into insignificance, when compared with those which daily and palpably issue from the assertion of "the general efficacy of Baptism in all who partake of the rite." The former evils are generally apparent, not so much in practice, as on the pages of speculative and accusing controversialists; while the latter force themselves on our notice in the experience of every day; for were a due regard paid to Baptismal privileges, and Baptismal duties, by all those who have solemnly engaged to improve the one, and to discharge the other; and were our lives, as they should be, practically employed in accomplishing our Baptismal vows; i. e. were our Baptism not merely a profession but a reality; is it possible that we could see so much pride, vanity, ambition, covetousness, and worldly-mindedness—so much mere morality, and so much awful presumption as we witness in the professing world? It could not surely be. Confidence in the *sign* is consistent enough with mere profession, and profession may consist with an accommodating similarity to the character of the professors around us: but vital possession of *the thing signified*—the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit, without which

it is no Sacrament to the recipient, must purify the heart, renew the life, and thoroughly furnish the man of God "unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 17. In the one case there is the genuine "answer of a good conscience toward God," a conscientious recognition of Baptismal obligations, and a corresponding holy conversation; in the other there is nothing more than "the putting away of the" outward "filth of the flesh;" 1 Pet. iii. 21. an ablution which, unless joined with the influence of the Spirit, can never affect the soul. And as Bishop Jewell asserts, "Verily to ascribe felicity or remission of sin, which is the inward work of the Holy Ghost, unto any manner of outward action whatsoever, it is a superstitious, a gross, and a Jewish error."<sup>1</sup>

But if the Sacrament of Baptism is thus rendered vain and effete by mistaking the sign for the thing signified,—the water for the Spirit; is this all the injury which it has received? Has it not to complain also of the unworthy treatment it has experienced in the house of its friends?

Blessed be God there are those who know and feel that Baptism is not "an outward and visible sign" only, but "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," and yet their estimate of the privileges and efficacy of Baptism is low and inoperative. They rather consider it as an introduction into a professing Church, than as accom-

<sup>1</sup> Jewell's Reply, &c. p. 442.

panied with any real spiritual blessings to the baptised, as admitted "into the Communion of the saints." Their faith in the promise issues in no corresponding practice in the education of the Child. They cannot so much be said to "doubt" as to forget that God has received the infant, that he has regenerated him with his Holy Spirit, that he has received him for his own child by adoption, and incorporated him into his holy Church; and that they have given God "heartly thanks" for the same. They do not consider the Child as thus "regenerated," "adopted," and "incorporated," and therefore they do not plead the promise for a blessing on their education of him as devoted to God, or call upon him, as one invested with so high privileges as "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," to walk worthy of his high calling. The promise affords them no aid in bringing up the Child as a child of God, and the privileges conferred are not urged as a ground of encouragement to induce to the pursuit of holiness, the attainment of one grace, or the regulation of one temper. The rich expressions of privileges actually conferred in Baptism, which occur in the Baptismal and Confirmation Services, and in the Catechism, have no influence on their practice. Neither Baptismal blessings, nor Baptismal vows are distinctly presented to the mind of the Child, and his Baptism has no practical purpose. Even these pious Parents make no demand on the spiritual superin-



tendence of the Sponsors of the Child ;—even pious Sponsors acknowledge no obligation of this spiritual superintendence ;—the Child grows up without any consciousness of his Baptismal enjoyments or privileges ;—and the Church, not merely the professing, but the spiritual Church entertains neither hopes nor fears on account of the Child, and consequently exercises no faith in the promise, and presents no prayers for its accomplishment towards him. And thus, even among the pious, Baptism is little more than a dead letter, promises without plea for their fulfilment—vows without concern to discharge them—a ceremony acquitting them from subsequent interest—a sign signifying nothing.

We have had of late many interesting treatises on education, most of which have lamented the defective instruction of our times ; but as it appears to me, the best treatise on education is to be found in the best principles and order for its practice. The Church of England has made the largest and most efficient provision for the holy education of its children : and no treatises ever yet published on this most interesting subject appear to me to approach in excellence within any comparable distance, to that of the Baptismal and Confirmation Services, and the Catechism of our Church. Here are the best *rules*, even those proposed by the Scriptures of truth—here are the best *means*, the application of the promises of a gracious God, the prayers of the sympathising

Church, spiritual instruction in graces and duties, and privileges unquestionably holy; and the confirming efficacy of the Holy Spirit—here is the best *issue*, certainty of success, dependent on our faith in the promise of a faithful God. Were we but consistent Churchmen, did we but adhere to this system of education laid down by our Church, beginning with the simple devotion of the Child to God, and training him up in the way that he should go, with a just confidence on the divine promise for success in our endeavours, we might then sow in hope that the holy principles of his childhood would, with growing years, be formed into holy habits, and that when he was old he would not depart from them.

And to what, indeed, My Dear Friend, may we ascribe the infidelity, the scepticism, the Socinianism, the spiritual indifference, the lukewarm profession, the fashionable formality, and the too visible ignorance of the blessed principles on which our Church is built, and above all, the confused notions of Baptism which so generally prevail, but to this departure from the simple mode proposed by our Church for the education of her children. It would be acting against the plainest principles of our nature, to educate our youth as we do at present, and to expect from such education a Christian practice. In what mode does Christianity as a practical system enter into our plan of instruction? Is it not notorious that mythology has assumed the place of Christianity, and that the

education of the young is more mythological than Christian? The respective systems by no means divide the attention of our youth, or exercise an equal influence in training their minds, or in forming their principles. On the Sabbath indeed they are taught to read Christian Scriptures, to attend a Christian place of worship, and to bow down to the Christian God as the true God; but on the other six days of the week how little is done to temper by Christian instruction the impure and corrupt elegancies of heathen learning, or even to neutralise the polluting effect of the lascivious examples of heathen deities—the false, obscene, excessive, and defiling sentiments and descriptions of heathen poets and historians—or the erroneous policy, the glaringly false morality, and the unmeasured profligacy of heathen philosophers and statesmen. The unqualified instruction of six days must be expected to influence the mind more than the customary attentions paid to Christian institutions and Christian instruction on the seventh; especially where Christianity is not so much taught in its spiritual influence and vital loveliness, as in the way of a task, of a dry lesson of ethics, or a system of theological orthodoxy. To expect Christian conduct from an education principally, nay in practice, almost exclusively heathen, is surely highly unphilosophical and unreasonable; it is in fact to expect impossibilities, to seek for “grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.” Matt. vii. 16.

I know it will be said, that at our schools and colleges Christianity is largely taught, that its evidences are insisted on, that prayers are regularly said, chapel and church attended, the Sabbath exempted from the ordinary occupations which would desecrate it, and the Bible held out as the alone volume of inspiration; that it has a decided preference assigned to it above all human productions; and that thus Christian impressions become habitual and customary. I grant, indeed, that these things produce an effect in impressing the youthful mind with the value of Christianity as an external dispensation, and that they ensure respect to our Established Church; but is the effect of all this teaching so powerful as the teaching of heathenism? Are not the principles enforced really heathen—the love of human glory, the cultivation of talent as the means of gratifying ambition, and acquiring distinction among men? and are not the virtues of heathens more practically recommended to the attention of the young than the graces of Jesus Christ and those spiritual perfections which constitute holiness? Indeed, it has long appeared to me that one fact is decisive of this question, the neglect of Hebrew literature in our general education: had the great truths of Revelation been the subject of general instruction, the language of that Revelation had been more generally cultivated: whereas it is notorious that not only in our ordinary education it finds no place, but

that in many of our Public Schools the cultivation of Hebrew literature is altogether excluded from the system.<sup>1</sup>

But indeed, My dear Friend, will not the plain truth of the case justify us in further remarking, that the plan of education laid down by our Church in the three formularies already specified, is only regarded by us as calculated to occupy the attention of our childish years while yet under maternal tuition; or that it may do well enough for the instruction of our Charity Schools and the children of the poor: and when we enter upon Greek and Latin authors, is not this very entrance into heathen literature the usual signal for laying aside the early instructions of our former years? or at least of admitting them to so secondary a place in our education, (if indeed it can be called secondary,) that from mere

<sup>1</sup> It is worth while to observe the attention paid to Scripture instruction, by the importance assigned to Hebrew literature in the education given by our Public Schools as they were established at the Reformation, or before or after that period. At Winchester and Eton founded before the Reformation, and at the Charter-house, founded since, when the purity of the principles of the Reformation had declined, Hebrew is not taught; while at St. Paul's, Westminster, and Merchant Taylors', founded during Reforming times, the Hebrew language still continues to be taught. The opportunity of early instruction in the rudiments of knowledge, once lost, is seldom regained amidst the occupations of after life; a remark which many of us can confirm by painful experience.

desuetude they are treated with indifference and neglect? And thus these admirable formularies become little more than a dead letter, a rule without practice, a system without observance, a privilege without enjoyment. And can it be the subject of wonder to a reflecting mind, that a course of education, Christian in name and heathen in effect, should produce its proper fruits; that a defective principle should issue in a defective practice, and that among all ranks of our people, and all the great moral executive of the country—the Cabinet, the Legislature, the Bar, the Magistracy, and the Pulpit—and in that perhaps chief organ of moral influence, the domestic circle, where first principles are usually formed into practice—the neglect of a sound pious education, provided by our truly Christian Church, should be visited by the state of society we behold—decency substituted for piety, form for substance, ordinances for devotion, and where the rottenness of heathen corruption seeks in vain for concealment under the nail-deep film of a Christian profession and a Christian name.

From this self-inflicted state of moral debasement to raise our still blessed country by the application of that system of education provided by a Church which she still upholds and venerates, is the design of the following hints. I profess myself hopeless of the revival of sound Christianity in our Church, but by a recurrence to the primitive principle on which she is founded,—



salvation by grace through faith in the Redeemer. This, I apprehend, to be the great prevailing principle of our Baptismal Service, and its kindred formularies. It is the free promise of mercy to the children of believing Parents, which at once encourages the Parent to present his infant for incorporation into "the Communion of the saints"—the child to holy effort, and holy perseverance in his Christian course—the Sponsors to undertake and to persist in their tutelary work with any hope of success—and the Church to extend her interest to every such incorporated little one, as a nascent believer, growing up under her prayers and affectionate communion, a sound member of that body of which Christ is the Head, and thus privileged to be a child of God, and an heir of glory.

## LETTER II.

## THE PARENT.

IF we ask then, how are the benefits of infant baptism to be secured, so as to answer the ends of a holy education? we answer, from faith in the general promises made to believing Parents in behalf of their Children, and particularly in the promise made at the celebration of this Sacrament to all who partake of it in faith. And these relate to the PARENTS—the SPONSORS—the INFANT baptised—and the CHURCH.

It is surely no small consolation to Christian Parents and to those who belong to the communion of our Church, in common with others who have entered into the married state, “reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God,” “that they may see their Children christianly and virtuously brought up” to the “praise and honour” of God. According to the doctrine of our Church, founded on the word of God, the

loveliest Child living is “by nature born in sin, and the Child of wrath,”—“forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and none can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born anew of water and the Holy Ghost.” It must therefore be the leading desire of these Parents’ hearts that their Children should be partakers of covenant mercies, and should be interested in all the blessings connected with that name, than which there is none other given “under heaven whereby we must be saved.” (Acts iv. 12.) And as Baptism has ever been considered by the Church of Christ as that initiating Sacrament, by which the Child receives the solemn investiture of his privileges as a believer in Christ; and as it is eminently so considered by that portion of the Church to which they belong; while they will hope for no blessing upon their Child but as faith draws it from the promise of a gracious God, so they will be desirous that every blessing of the promise should be sealed to him by that Sacrament which is its sign and pledge.

It might be expected, that, as our Church takes for granted, that all the Infants of her members will be presented for the sign and seal of their Church-membership, in the initiatory Sacrament of Baptism, any formal mention of the grounds of Infant-baptism might be spared, and that nothing more was necessary than to insist on the privileges and duties of this Sacrament, and to

encourage all within the pale of the Church to enjoy the one and to discharge the other. Our Church assumes that all who are engaged in the ordinance, are “persuaded of the good-will of our heavenly Father towards this Infant, declared by his Son Jesus Christ: and” are “nothing doubting but that he favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours, in bringing this Infant to his holy Baptism.” It assumes, therefore, that all such are convinced of the excellence of the rite, and of the propriety of its institution. And to such all further mention of the grounds of Infant-baptism might seem superfluous. But so low is the general estimate of Baptism among us, that it is to be feared, that few have taken pains to inform themselves of the grounds on which the Baptism of Infants rests. The introduction, therefore, of the more obvious reasons for the administration of Baptism to Infants seems indispensable.

I say “the more obvious reasons,” for it would be quite inconsistent with the plan of this letter, as well as unjust to the subject itself, to attempt any thing like a complete statement of all the grounds that may be adduced in favour of Infant-Baptism, within the short compass proposed. What I shall offer, by the blessing of God, are such as are conclusive in deciding my own mind on the subject; and if they should appear to be insufficient to any who may favour them with a perusal, I must refer such to the authors who have written professedly on the question.

I am aware that the acceptance which this subject will find, will vary with the quarter from which it is presented. If it come from the regions of controversy, and address itself dryly to the mind, apart from those circumstances in which fallen man is found as a rebel to his God, desirous of reconciliation to his favour, and anxious for every mark and pledge which may assure to him and his, the possession of that favour, it will meet with a cold reception probably, and produce no greater effect than the attempts which have preceded it. From those regions of controversy, therefore, where mere mind reigns devoid of feeling, and intolerant prejudice banishes the kindlier dispositions of the heart, I make no approach. Religion is only really acceptable to a mind rightly disposed, or what the Scripture calls an "understanding heart." We do not so much need the logical acuteness of the head to comprehend ideas, as the kindly disposition of the heart to approve and to embrace them. With all the advantages ever yet ascribed to it, I am one, who have long thought that controversy has done more harm to the Church than it has ever done good.<sup>1</sup> Truth spoken in opposition, and

<sup>1</sup> If the proverbial allusion to express the bitterness of human hatred, is not—the hatred of philosophers, or the hatred of politicians, or of rivals, or even that of those whose trade is war,—but *odium theologicum*, the hatred of divines; it is surely time for the honour of our common Christianity, that theological discussion should exhibit the

therefore too often under irritation, prejudice, or party-feeling, was never yet a just exhibition of the Gospel; it was counteracting in spirit what it was asserting in the letter. I utterly renounce, therefore, all approach to controversy, and take my stand on that station of domestic life, where the kindlier affections have their freest exercise—where, in the bosom of a Christian family, the religion of Jesus presents its fairest exhibition, and where it both originates and matures the sweetest character of grace.

That we may view the subject then in its due bearing, let us place ourselves in the family of two Christian Parents, whose conjugal affection has been blessed with a living Child. It is not only received as the pledge of their affection to each other, but of God's love to them. They receive it in faith; believing his word, that "children are an heritage of the Lord, and" that "the fruit of the womb is his reward;" that "happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them;" and

essence of that choicest gift of God, the name of which it bears. That man knows but little of himself, who, even in his honest ardour to establish truth, does not feel "the abundance of his own sense" of a subject ever inclining him to intolerance of every differing sentiment. I would avail myself of this opportunity of requesting my reader to pardon what he may deem excessive in the course of this work; and to attribute it rather to the infirmities of a nature over-sanguine in effecting its object, than to any intention of trenching upon the sentiments of another, by the undue enforcement of its own.



that the blessings of a religious household, so beautifully described by David, are among the richest gifts, both in providence and grace, that the bounty of our Heavenly Father can bestow. His wife seated in the chair of domestic respect, “as a fruitful vine by the sides of” his “house;” his “children, like olive-plants, round about the” same “table,” orderly, affectionate, and taught to love God—surely such a scene whether witnessed or anticipated, must impress the grateful husband who fears God with the conviction, that “thus blessed,” he is blessed “out of Zion;” that these blessings are his as he fears God; and he trusts to “see the good of Jerusalem all the days of” his “life,” even to “see his children’s children, and peace upon Israel.” Psalm cxxviii. Thus connecting both his present and future happiness as well as that of his Child with the fear of God, he is most desirous of securing to him every spiritual blessing: and while it is his object to train him up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, as his truest happiness, it is also his object to assure himself, that God, to whom he has devoted his Child, has a favourable countenance towards him, and that his “labour” shall not be “in vain in the Lord.” 1 Cor. xv. 58.

With this view he will reflect on the instances of kindness shewn by God to Children. When Korah and his company were destroyed, “notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.” Numb. xxvi. 11. So of the Edomite and the

Egyptian it is said, though excluded themselves, “the children that are begotten of them, shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation.” Deut. xxiii. 8. The jealousy of God extends no further than to the third or fourth generation of them that hate him, in visiting “the sins of the fathers upon the children;” but he shews mercy unto thousands of generations of those that love him, and keep his commandments. Exod. xx. 6. His jealousy towards the family of the wicked, knows a measure of punishment; his mercy towards the family of those that love him knows no measure of grace. And when God spared Nineveh, his consideration for the helpless Infants in “that great city,” formed a leading ground of his merciful forbearance, “wherein are more than six-score thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left.” Jonah iv. 11.

To the above, these Parents will add the cheering consideration that the Children of believers are “beloved for the fathers’ sakes;” and that, as such, they have many exceeding great and precious promises, the rich expressions of God’s favour to them especially. “The just man walketh in his integrity, his children are blessed after him.” Prov. xx. 7. “The faithful God which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.” Deut. vii. 9. “The righteous—is ever merciful and lendeth; and his seed is bless-

ed." Psalm xxxvii. 25, 26.—" For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to generation and generation."—*margin*. Psalm c. 5.—" The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." Psalm cii. 28.—" The generation of the upright shall be blessed." Psalm cxii. 2.—" But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." Psalm ciii. 17, 18.—" The seed of the righteous shall be delivered." Prov. xi. 21.—" I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Isaiah xlv. 3—5.—The above is a full and comprehensive promise, which may cheer the heart of the most timid believing Parent. " But my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." Isaiah li. 8.—" They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." Isaiah lxxv. 23.—" His mercy is on them that fear him from

generation to generation." Luke i. 50.—I close this enumeration of promises by that large and ample expression of mercy uttered by St. Peter; "Repent, and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off," whether in time, or place, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 38, 39.

And all these promises seem to be confirmed by the following striking passage of St. Paul; "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." To which words I will only add Hooker's comment. "We are plainly taught of God, that the seed of Faithful Parentage is holy from the very birth."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed God looks upon the Children of the Church as his own Children, as is evident from the following affecting expostulation of God with his people, during their captivity in Babylon. "Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them [idols] to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain *my* children, and delivered

<sup>1</sup> See Ecc. Pol. Book v. ch. 60. See also this text largely discussed by Wall. "Hist. of Infant Baptism," i. 123.

them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?" Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.

Encouraged by these repeated promises of mercy and love to his Children, all of which the believing Parent will apply to himself and his Child by faith; he will find yet larger encouragement in that act of condescending love, when the Saviour confirmed these promises of mercy in his acceptance of the "Infants," Luke xviii. 15. that were brought to him, and in bestowing his blessing upon them. Will these Parents form a false judgment of our Church's intention in selecting this one passage from the Scripture, as the ground of Baptismal blessing, without mentioning one of the above promises; if they should infer, that she conceives the virtue of all the promises to the Children of believers, to be concentrated in this one act of our Lord, when he received Infants into his arms and blessed them? In this act is something beyond promise; it is not a promise given, but a promise acted out; not a word of mercy spoken, but an act of mercy accomplished. "Ye perceive," says the Church, "how by his outward gesture and deed he declared his good will toward them, for"—he did not give a promise; but he ratified every promise heretofore given to the Children of believers, by his authentic act and deed;—"he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them." On this accomplishment of promise she encourages the faith of the believer; "Wherefore we being *thus*

persuaded of the good will of our Heavenly Father towards this infant, declared by his son Jesus Christ, and nothing doubting," &c: and in the address to the Sponsors, shortly after, she adds, "ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his Gospel, to grant all these things that ye have prayed for: which promise he for his part will most surely keep and perform." In the first sentence the Congregation are reminded of "the good will of our Heavenly Father" towards "infants," first the subject of promise, that promise afterwards practically "declared by his Son Jesus Christ," in his loving acceptance of them: and in the second sentence the Sponsors are encouraged by the general promise "ask and ye shall have," to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ will "grant all these things that ye have prayed for." Here then are great and abundant promises,—promises ratified by the practical kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh, full of encouragement and peace: and the benefit of these promises, these faithful Parents will apply to themselves and their offspring.

Nor will they stop here: they will on so important a question, as that of the favour of God towards their Child, not rest merely on the general assurance of the mercy of God towards him in the promise; they will ask further for some particular token, sign, seal, and pledge of this mercy in a Sacrament especially appointed for this purpose. If the Child, according to the promise, be



a gracious Child, as the offspring of the believer, he belongs to the family of grace; and there must surely be some visible mode appointed by God for his admission into that family, a mode by which the Church shall testify the reception of the Child into her bosom, and afford the Parents, and Sponsors, and the Child himself, when he arrives at an age to comprehend his own privileges, a pledge to assure them that such Child does really belong to the family of Christ.

And on looking into the page of Scripture, and observing the general practice of the Church throughout all ages, from the early covenant of God with Abraham and all his faithful posterity, both Jew and Gentile, they will to their inexpressible satisfaction learn, that as God has given a promise of grace to believers and their Children after them, so he has uniformly afforded them the richest assurance of the blessing, by appointing a particular Sacrament for the initiatory ingrafting of such Children into his Church, as the means of actually conveying the blessing, and as a sign, and seal, and pledge to assure every believer of the same.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Stephen states this idea most concisely and impressively, and in a manner encouraging to every Christian Parent. "And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and intreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and

While these believing Parents contemplate their Child as born in sin, and therefore the Child of wrath, it must be their most anxious inquiry, how can this Child stand before God without the imputation of sin, and be assured of restoration to his favour? And they will see, that God has done this, for the comfort of believers, by the Sacrament of Circumcision under the Law, and by the Sacrament of Baptism under the Gospel; and that while the seal of ratification has been altered from the blood of Circumcision to the more merciful water of Baptism, the blessing has equally been conferred by promise, and not by any mere act or observance of law, whether under the Law or under the Gospel.

And as Circumcision, as preparatory to Baptism, appears to be the hinge on which the question mainly turns, it seems to deserve our more particular attention. Let us consider it first then in its institution. “As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many

serve me in this place.” Here is the promise. Next we have the seal of it; “and he gave him the covenant of circumcision.” Thus assured, Abraham acted on this assurance—“and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day:” and the Patriarchs acted with the same faith: “and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve Patriarchs.” The Christian Parent and all his posterity have the same warrant. First the promise; next the assurance and pledge of the promise, “the covenant” of Baptism; let him only act with the same faith, and all the blessings of the Covenant shall be to him and his Children.

nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham, for a Father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." This is God's part of the covenant, and can it be said from these expressions, that "the old fathers did look only for transitory promises?" The words seem to convey blessings of two characters. First temporal; Abraham was to "be a Father of many nations," he was to be "exceeding fruitful," "kings" should "come out of" him, and "Canaan" should be "an everlasting possession" to him and his "seed after" him. The covenant had, secondly, spiritual blessings: for Canaan was to be given to him and his seed "for an everlasting possession," intimating that eternal possession of which Canaan was but a type, concluding the promise with the blessed spiritual assurance, "and I will be their God." Jehovah assures him also in the preceding verse, "and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting

covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Did the Father of the faithful annex no other meaning to these expressions, "to be a God unto thee,<sup>1</sup> and to thy seed after thee," in "Canaan an everlasting possession," than that God should be to him a God in providence, in a land flowing with the milk and honey of temporal prosperity? or in this covenant did he see the day of Christ; and recognise God as a God of mercy and grace, pronouncing spiritual blessings on himself and his posterity? If he saw nothing more than temporal blessings in this covenant, his faith had surely but a comparatively poor subject for its confidence; but if he accepted God as his God, and as the God of his seed after him, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, dispensing spiritual blessings to himself and his offspring; here was a subject of promise worthy of the utmost confidence of the Father of the faithful, in which he recognised himself as the distinguished channel of the primeval blessing of the Messiah, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And this was surely the object of his faith.

<sup>1</sup> For God to be our God is the highest privilege he can bestow upon us. It is to impart himself to us, with all his communicable excellences.—"And in his blood shed upon the cross (says Bradford addressing his God) thou hast made a covenant with me, which thou wilt never forget, that thou art, and wilt be my Lord and my God: that is, thou wilt forgive me my sins, and be wholly mine, with all thy power, wisdom, righteousness, truth, glory, and mercy."

Then follows man's part of the covenant : " and God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee ; every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed," &c. Gen. xvii. In the painful act of Circumcision, the faithful Jew doubtless recognised the excision of a fleshly nature ; and as his faith discerned the spiritual nature of the rite, so did he really enjoy the blessing. But we cannot suppose that any spiritual advantage was conveyed by the rite, any further than that advantage was applied by faith ; even as at present, Baptismal washing is not the blessing, but the thing signified, the heavenly cleansing by the blood and Spirit of Christ, which living faith extracts from the application of the sign and seal as confirming the promise.

It is clear from a variety of passages in Scripture, that Circumcision had more than a national distinction, it had a spiritual distinction also. " Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart." Deut. x. 10. " And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed,

to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx. 6. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem." Jer. iv. 4. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcised, &c. for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart:" (Jer. ix. 25, 26.) and the Apostle decides the point beyond all question: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom. ii. 28, 29.

Here then it is clear, First, that Circumcision was a spiritual rite, and conveyed spiritual blessings; secondly, that the Child circumcised the eighth day was capable of spiritual blessings; thirdly, that the Child thus circumcised was considered, and by this Sacrament admitted, a member of the Church; and it seems to me to be equally clear, that the spiritual blessing was conferred on the Child, not as it was a Jew, "one outwardly," but as those who brought the Child and the Church acted faith on the promise, and as the circumcised Child exercised faith in the same promise, in after life, and showed that his "circumcision" was "that



of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ;” practically applying the promise to his own individual advantage, by believing that the God of faithful Abraham was his God also, as the faithful seed of Abraham, and evidencing that faith by a corresponding holiness of life.

We may further remark, that the Gospel is the subject of all the Sacraments, whether under the Legal dispensation, or that of the Gospel. The blessings of Circumcision were by promise ; the blessings of the Passover were by promise also : so under the Gospel dispensation the blessings of the Sacraments, both of Baptism and of the Lord’s Supper, are by promise. What then is the great and uniform blessing of promise ? The forgiveness of sin, free, full, and sovereign, not on account of works, but simply from mercy and grace. Let us attend then to the Apostle’s statement of this subject, and apply his reasoning. He thus states the Gospel and its blessings as connected with Circumcision : “ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” Rom. iv. 8. This is a compendium of the Gospel : the non-imputation of sin to the sinner, or the removal of the charge of sin from his person, and in this his gratuitous pardon, is the sum of redemption : as the Apostle declares, “ In whom we have redemption through his blood,—the forgiveness of sins.” Eph. i. 7. In either case this blessing is a free gift, whether bestowed on the Jew or the Gentile, of which the Sacrament is the means and pledge ; and faith is

the recipient, as in the instance of Abraham, whose faith in the promise was counted to him for righteousness, of which promise Circumcision was *afterwards* given as the seal, that he might be equally the Father of believers, whether circumcised or uncircumcised. “Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised.” Circumcision was not the blessing; that was the non-imputation of sin: it was only the sign of that blessing, which was signified by it; neither did the mere observance of the rite of Circumcision benefit Abraham or his Children without faith, for it was only the seal of the righteousness of that faith which he had before his circumcision: and thus Abraham is “the Father” of all “them that believe” in all times of the Church, “that righteousness might be imputed to them also.” Whether under the Law then, or under the Gospel, the blessing is given by promise, to which the Sacrament was superadded, as the means, and pledge, and sign, and seal. The real blessing was under both appropriated by faith; it was the faith of Abraham the Father of the Church which conveyed the spiritual blessing to his circumcised offspring; and it

is the faith of the Church ever since that has conveyed the blessing to her Children, whether under the Sacrament of Circumcision, or of its succeeding counterpart, Baptism. The Church is still the family of faithful Abraham, her Children are still the children of the promise made to him, and the seal of the promise varies with the character of the dispensation under which they are placed.

And this conclusion appears to be just, not only from the reason of the thing, as above, but from the express terms of the Apostle in the epistle to the Colossians. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ—buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." What is the plain sense of the passage? The Colossians were "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," which Circumcision consisted "in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the Circumcision of Christ," which Circumcision of Christ, or Christian Circumcision, consisted in being "buried with him in baptism," in which baptism ye are not only buried, but "wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith," &c. Let the whole passage be read, not as divided into verses, but as one connected sentence, introducing a hyphen between "Christ" and "buried," as above, and all difficulty seems to be removed as to its sense; then

“ the circumcision of Christ ” is the being “ buried with him in baptism, &c.” in other words what Circumcision was under the Law, Baptism is under the Gospel of Christ. This appears to be the most natural construction of the passage ; it is that which is given to it by names of no mean note ; the Belgic confession expressly stating, “ For the which cause Paul calleth Baptism the circumcision of Christ.” And if Baptism be admitted to be under the Gospel what Circumcision was under the Law, (and it is apparent, as above, that Circumcision conveyed spiritual blessings,) it is clear that if Infants were capable of spiritual blessings by being partakers of the one sacrament, they are equally capable of the same blessings by being made partakers of the other.

It is not a little remarkable that the early Fathers of the Church to the time of Augustine, consider Baptism as given to us in the place of Circumcision ; as Origen, Cyprian, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, &c. ; and that three of them, Basil, Augustine, and Chrysostom, give to the above passage in the epistle to the Colossians, the same sense as that ascribed to it above.<sup>1</sup> The same sentiment prevailed at the Reformation ; and it cannot reasonably be doubted, that it has been at all times both anterior and subsequent to that

<sup>1</sup> See Wall’s “ Defence of the History of Infant-baptism,” vol. iii. pp. 269—272. The discussion on the above text which these pages contain will amply reward a patient perusal of them.

period, the generally received sentiment of the Church, that what Circumcision was to the faithful Jew under the Law, Baptism is at least to the faithful Christian under the Gospel. The covenant blessings of the Father of the faithful are sure to all his faithful seed ; and as they are sealed by the blood of Circumcision under the first dispensation, they are sealed by the milder seal of the water of Baptism under the second. The Church is equally “ Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal. iii. 29.

To the above considerations, let it be added, that Baptism by water was a practice to which the Jew had long been accustomed before the coming of Christ, and to which he seems to have been especially familiarised during the ministry of our Lord, by the introductory Baptism of him who was the last messenger of the Law, and the preparatory harbinger of the Gospel, expressly sent, as the messenger of the Saviour, to prepare his way before him.

That the Jews had long been accustomed to this practice is affirmed by Wall, from sufficient authority. “ It is evident,” says he “ that the custom of the Jews before our Saviour’s time (and as they themselves affirm, from the beginning of their law,) was to baptise as well as circumcise any proselyte that came over to them from the nations. This does fully appear both from the books of the Jews themselves, and also of others that understood the Jewish customs, and have written of them.

They reckoned all mankind besides themselves to be in an unclean state, and not capable of being entered into the covenant of Israelites without a *Washing* or *Baptism*, to denote their purification from their uncleanness. And this was called the "baptising of them unto Moses." "This custom of the Jews continued after Christ's time, and after their expulsion from the Holy Land; and continues (as I shewed from Leo Modena,) to this day, if there be any that now a-days do turn proselytes to their religion. Wherever they sojourned, if they found any of that country that chose to be of their religion, they would not admit him, unless he would first be washed or baptised by them."<sup>1</sup> Thus the idea of Baptism as typical of the spiritual washing of the soul, was an idea to which the Jew had long been accustomed.

<sup>1</sup> See Wall's "History of Infant-Baptism," introduction pp. 68, 72. It does not consist with the proposed brevity of the above statement to quote the authorities given by Wall: they are well worth consulting by those who entertain any doubt of the fact. It is quite clear however, that the Jews were familiar with Baptism as a rite; for on their expostulating with John the Baptist, "Why baptisest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet," John i. 25. they did not expostulate with him on his introducing baptism as a new rite, but they questioned his personal right and title to baptise; and which had he been the Christ they intimated that he would have had; and John's answer is to the same effect, "I baptise with water;" not defending baptism with water, but his right or title to baptise.



The Jews were also familiarised to Baptism by the preparatory Baptism of John, which was just that intermediate dispensation that formed an easy transition from the Law to the Gospel. He baptised with water to repentance, which as it does not appear to have superseded the Circumcision of the Law on one hand, neither did it convey the full spiritual blessings of the Gospel on the other. We do not find that Infants were admitted to the Baptism of John, so that Circumcision, so far as appears, took place as usual, during his Baptismal ministry; while on the other hand those, who were "baptised unto John's baptism," might "not so much as hear whether there be any Holy Ghost," Acts xix. 2, 3. and must be referred to Christ for those full spiritual blessings which he alone could communicate, who was to "baptise" them "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matt. iii. 11. Thus John's Baptism was an intermediate dispensation between Circumcision and Baptism, preparing the way for the substitution of the latter for the former.

With the advantage of these considerations, let us conceive a faithful Jew to be the hearer of St. Peter's first sermon preached on the day of Pentecost, when the Gospel was completed, and when "they that gladly received his word were baptised." Acts ii. 41. Baptised himself, what is he to do with his Child? This Child has arrived at its eighth day. By the spirit of the new dispensation, Circumcision is done away: and is there

no Sacrament under the Gospel which seals covenant blessings to his Child as Circumcision did under the Law? At the institution of Circumcision, God has promised to be “a God” to Abraham, and “to his seed after” him—that blessing was a spiritual blessing, extending, under the outward emblem “circumcision,” to that of “the foreskin of the heart”—the promise was “sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham,” Rom. iv. 16. he hears of a “circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,” which is the “being buried with him in baptism:” Christ has instituted a new Sacrament of Baptism, and has enjoined his disciples, to go and teach all nations, and baptise them; if all nations had been proselyted to Judaism, they must have been baptised at least; he is accustomed to this Baptism by the ordinary mode of receiving proselytes; he is still more familiarised with it, having been a partaker of John’s baptism: shall not his faith then apply the new Sacrament of Baptism to his Child in the place of Circumcision, and thus the Child be outwardly acknowledged by the Church as an heir of grace, as well as virtually be such by the covenant of promise? In Circumcision his Child would have received his covenant name, as the Jewish Child did; Luke i. 59; and ii. 21. at Baptism he receives the same—in the former the

Child receives the seal of the promise ; in the latter it receives the same,—in the former it is accepted into Church-membership; in the latter it finds the same acceptance,—in the former the faith of the Church has enrolled the Child in the number of the faithful; in the latter the same faith has admitted the Child to the same blessed privilege,—in the former he is educated on the promise as a Child of faithful Abraham; in the latter he is educated in faith of the same promise, and of additional and confirmatory promises, as “ a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.”

And if Baptism be not the successor of Circumcision, what is the designation of his Child? He is not a Jew, he is not a Gentile, he is not a Christian; he is nothing “ outwardly; ” he nominally belongs to no Church, no “ household of God; ” for without the pledge of Church-membership, which the initiatory Sacraments of either dispensation confessedly are, no visible Church acknowledges him; he is consequently without Church character, without designation and name.

Let the two Christian parents then, whom we suppose to be discussing this subject, place themselves just in the position of this converted Jew, at the first establishment of the Gospel, with all his previous knowledge, preparatory habits, and introductory education for the substitution of water for blood as the emblem, and Baptism for Circumcision as the Sacrament; and let them add

to this the sweet and blessed character of the Gospel, full of encouragement, and invitation, and promise, demanding faith, and discouraging doubt and hesitation and distance—and will they not see, that the transition from Circumcision to Baptism is natural and easy, and that Baptism is just the very privilege which the Church, so richly redeemed, might expect from the kindness and condescension of her covenant God?

I must confess, My Dear Friend, so deeply impressed is my mind with this view of Baptism,—and I would speak it with the utmost lowliness that dust and ashes should assume when speaking of the gracious dispensations of Almighty wisdom and love—that had I been a Jew converted to Christianity at that early time, with all my previous associations and prepossessions, on comparing the two dispensations together, I should have been disposed to have complained, that the archi-type did not answer to its type, nor the building correspond with the scaffolding, had Baptism been wanting in the new dispensation, as the pledge of covenant mercies to the Children of the faithful; and I must yet go further, and say, that if this view be correct, so prepared was the mind of the Church for this substitution of one Sacrament for the other, as the initiatory pledge of covenant blessings to her children, as to render the explicit mention of baptising Children, in the final commission to teach and baptise all nations, wholly superfluous; that in the then prepared state of

the Christian mind for this application of the ordinance to Children, it would have been as unnecessary to say, "administer this baptism to Infants," as at the Institution of the other Sacrament it would have been an unnecessary announcement to have said, "do not you only receive this in remembrance of me, but let your women receive it also." Nor does it appear to me, that the general custom of the Church for centuries thus to apply the promise of mercy to Infants, would ever have been either interrupted or questioned, had not declining doctrine and declining practice found it necessary to contradict the doctrine, or counteract the practice of Infant-Baptism in earlier times ; or a too hasty attempt to prevent the mischiefs arising from the abuse of the practice in the general laxity of a mere Christian profession, have induced some in these latter times, to innovate rather than to reform, and to abolish the privilege, rather than to correct the scandal of an undue administration of it.

And surely the general custom of the Church of Christ through all ages from the institution of Baptism, as it may be collected from history, affords no small encouragement to these Parents to baptise their Infants. Origen, who lived one hundred and ten years after the Apostles, says, "For this also it was, that the Church had from the Apostles a tradition [or order] to give baptism even to infants."<sup>1</sup> And again, "Besides

<sup>1</sup> "Pro hôc et Ecclesia ab Apostolis traditionem suscepit

all this, let it be considered, what is the reason, that whereas the baptism of the Church is given for forgiveness of sins, infants also are, by the usage of the Church <sup>1</sup> baptised; when if there were nothing in Infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them."

Augustine's testimony is very full and explicit, and brings down the evidence to three hundred years from the time of the Apostles. "And if any one do ask for divine authority in this matter; though that which the whole Church practises, and which has not been instituted by Councils, but was ever in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing delivered [or ordered] by authority of the Apostles; <sup>2</sup> yet we may besides take a true estimate, how much the Sacrament of Baptism does avail Infants, by the circumcision which God's former people received."

"But the *custom* of our Mother the Church in baptizing infants must not be disregarded, nor be accounted needless, nor believed to be other than a tradition [or order] of the Apostles." <sup>3</sup>

etiam parvulis baptismum dare." Wall, vol. i. pp. 54, 55.

<sup>1</sup> "Secundùm Ecclesiæ observantiam," &c. Wall, i. 53.

<sup>2</sup> "Quamquam quod universa tenet Ecclesia, nec consiliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate Apostolicâ traditum rectissimè creditur," &c. Wall, i. 105.

<sup>3</sup> "Consuetudo tamen matris Ecclesiæ in baptizandis parvulis nequaquam spernenda est, neque ullo modo superflua deputanda, nec omnino credenda nisi Apostolica esse traditio." Wall, i. 213.

My reason for referring to Wall is, because his work pur-



It is clear to my mind from these extracts, and from others which might be produced from their works, that for the first three centuries the baptising of Infants was the general "usage" and "custom" of the Church, that which was "not instituted by Councils," because unnecessary, it being "that which the whole Church practises." The cases of Tertullian and Gregory Nazianzen are evident exceptions to the general sentiment and practice of the Church, and therefore corroborate the evidence for the universal reception of Infant-baptism among Christians, since the exception proves the rule. And throughout all subsequent ages, from the days of Augustine to this hour, the same remark may be made; those who do not baptise their Infants at this day, are exceptions in the Church of Christ; the Universal Church throughout the world concurring in the practice as it ever has done, as is apparent from the history of its creed and usage.<sup>1</sup>

ports to be a History of Infant-baptism, and abounds with original information from the Fathers; to the extracts from whose writings an easy reference may be made. My appeal to him is more for documents than sentiments; though I am obliged to him for both.

<sup>1</sup> In order to invalidate the force of this conclusion, drawn from the general habit of the primitive Church, as apparent from history, an attempt is made at once to depreciate the authority of these primitive times, by representing that it was their custom to administer to Infants the Sacrament of the Eucharist as well as that of Baptism. But let the question be fairly stated. No mention is found of this practice before

But these Parents will not only be confirmed in their favourable sentiments of Infant-baptism by the above considerations, and others of a similar character which might be adduced : there is yet a species of evidence on this question, unheeded alas ! in the noise of controversy, but whose mild and persuasive voice is peculiarly acceptable to the faithful Parent, desirous of assuring himself that his Child is within the covenant of mercy, and that

the time of CYPRIAN, one hundred and fifty years after the times of the Apostles ; and he does not speak of Infants, but of a child four or five years old ; nor after him till the time of AUGUSTINE and INNOCENT of Rome, three hundred years from the same times, from whose authority the practice seems to have spread throughout the West for the following six hundred years ; during which time it was adopted by the Greek Church. It declined in the West about the year one thousand, when the Church of Rome, beginning to entertain the doctrine of Transubstantiation, no longer gave the holy elements to Infants, though probably to this day, it is continued in the Greek Church, as it was observed by it, about a century since. [See Wall, ii. 446.] It is obvious to remark on this account, that the practice of administering the Sacrament of the Eucharist to Infants was unknown for a century and a half after the Apostolic times, and that its existence even then is uncertain ; that it wants the stamp of that primitive authority, which derives its virtue from the well-known axiom, “that which is first is true.” And as it is not so *early* as the Baptism of Infants, neither, if it ever did obtain so general usage in the Church, was it ever *general* till after the time of AUGUSTINE and INNOCENT of Rome, three hundred years from the Apostles, when the Church was overrun with corruptions both of doctrine and practice. The cases, therefore, seem by no means parallel.

he should be privileged with the seal of so distinguished a blessing. I mean the evidence that flows from the peculiarly mild and lovely character of the Gospel, as a dispensation of mercy ; such as the following :

Without Baptism, children seem to be more considered under the Law than under the Gospel.

Without Baptism, faith fails of its due encouragement, the promise and the Sacrament to confirm it.

Without Baptism, the Church gives the Children of the faithful no accrediting mark of entrance into its communion ; or that they are partakers of its interests, its sympathies, and its prayers : In a word, they are without covenant name, and character, because without the confirmatory seal.

It is consistent with the nature of the Gospel, to give to a doubt the most favourable, and not the most harsh construction.

It is a want of eharity to the whole Communion of Saints, both glorified and militant, to decline from the universal practice of the Church, in filling up the ranks of her members, throughout all ages, by the Baptismal admission of the Children of the faithful to her notice and regard.

And surely the faithful Parent desirous of Baptismal blessings for his Child, may feel a want of assurance in the absence of such ordinance, as the covenanted seal of mercy,—of the maternal care of the Church,—of God the Father, as the reconciled Father of his Child in Christ Jesus,—of the

kind encouraging interest of him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me,"—and of the regeneration of "the Spirit of adoption;" the Sacrament of Baptism being the great accrediting "means" by which he receives the same, as well as "a pledge" to assure him of it.

But as the spirit of these suggestions will, by God's blessing, be more or less enforced in the following pages, I will offer but one more remark under this head: which is, that a faithful man will be equally fearful of wronging the mercy of God in Christ, and of depriving the Infants of the faithful of their rich boon of mercy, by contracting the Scriptural expressions of privilege by any human reasonings: he will rather give them the largest meaning that faith can apply to them, "the length and breadth of all the plain as far as faith can see."

Consider the expressions of our Lord's commission to baptise: "Go ye therefore, and teach *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, &c." Matt. xxviii. 19. &c.: a large portion of every nation consists of Infants: the original promise to Abraham was, "in thy seed shall all the *nations* of the earth be blessed:" the Infants of Abraham's own nation were capable of spiritual blessings, of which their Circumcision was the pledge; and, if so, surely the Infants of all other nations are capable of spiritual blessings also, of which Baptism is now the pledge. If it does not appear to some that there is any intentional allu-

sion made by our Lord, in adopting the word "nations," to the same word used in the original grant of the blessing to the Father of the faithful of all nations, whether Jew or Gentile; faith, on the contrary, sees that our Lord, in adopting the same expression, would convey the same covenant blessings to the Infants of all nations, sealing them under the Gospel not with blood, but with water. Thus as Abraham is the Father of the faithful of all nations, so the promise is thus made sure to all the seed.

I present the following passage to the faith of every Christian Parent, and leave it to the acceptance of this efficient Interpreter.

"And they brought young children [infants] Luke xviii. 15,. to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark x. 13. Let faith but interpret the circumstances, the persons, the words, and the blessing of the above passage, and love will never have to complain that one Infant has been withheld from Baptismal privileges.

Let the same Interpreter give the sense of the following passage, and the faithful Parents shall

be filled with holy fear, lest in withholding their Child from Baptismal blessings, they subject themselves to the charge of “offending” the spiritual welfare of him, who in virtue of the promise is accounted a believer. “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” Matt. xviii. 1—6.

The last passage I will select as the subject of holy fear, lest in omitting the Baptism of his Infant, the faithful Parent should violate its meaning, is that which the Church of Christ for fifteen hundred years, from its early institution to the days of the Reformation, has ever applied to Baptism; “Jesus answered, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man<sup>1</sup> be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

<sup>1</sup> εἰς μὴ τις, except a *Person*, i. e. *every one, a man*, generally comprehending all our human nature: John iii. 5.



God." It is well known that the early Fathers of the Church gave the most rigorous interpretation to these words, proceeding so far on the letter of the text, as to exclude from heaven such persons, whether Infants or others, as had not been baptised. But abating the rigour of this interpretation, a faithful Parent, alive to the spiritual interests of his child, may not suffer it to pass him without its due impression. Certainly "God is not tied to means," and damnation is not awarded to him that is not baptised, but to him "that believeth not;" still as the words of the passage, as interpreted for ages by the general sense of the Church, seem to connect the outward seal with the inward blessing, the faithful Parent will be desirous that his Infant should be a partaker of the outward seal, that he may, by fulfilling the word, "fulfil all righteousness" also.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If an excessive and too exclusive sense may have been given to this text, as applicable to Baptism by the Church before the Reformation; has not too low and indistinct a sense as specially applicable to that Sacrament been given to it by many since that time? It is true such passages as the following occur both in the Old and New Testament: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and make you clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. It is true also that "Spirit" is exe-

As some of these passages will meet us again in the course of this discussion, I forbear from all

getical or explanatory of its figure "water." And to what has the figure a reference but to the divers washings or baptisms [διαφοροις βαπτισμοις] of the legal dispensation spoken of by the Apostle, Heb. ix. 10. This dispensation was confessedly preparatory to that of the Gospel. Now it is the privilege of him who enjoys the full light of day to look back on, and to decypher the imperfect shadows of the morning. It is the province of the Gospel to explain the meaning of the Law. May we not stand then on the eminence, afforded us by the positive institution of Baptism, as literally interpreted and as confirmed by the practice of almost the whole Christian world, and thus give a substance to the shadows of the Law?

First here is a preparatory process in the "divers washings" of the Legal ceremonies; then a frequent reference is made to these as anticipative illustrations of that spiritual purity which was to distinguish the day of the Gospel, as above. Then, as it seems, the Jews gave a practical application to this illustration by the Baptismal reception of proselytes. Next the shadows assume a more substantial appearance in the Baptism of repentance, which marked *his* ministry, who came to prepare the way of the Lord, and to whom "went out Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." A stronger light was imparted in the Baptism of *him* whom thus it became "to fulfil all righteousness." With the advantage of this light we come to the much-contested passage, John iii. 5. to which, if the context be considered, I am not aware that any passage strictly parallel can be found. Our Lord first informs Nicodemus, that without regeneration, no person can *see* or comprehend the kingdom of God; and on the Jewish Ruler expressing his surprise, he proceeds further to inform him

further comment on them here, and merely adduce them as Scriptures which strongly apply to the

how the entrance into this kingdom is to be effected, and this is by being “born of water and of the Spirit;” of “water,” which, by what he and “Jerusalem” had seen in John’s Baptism, was the figure of spiritual purification, and of the “Spirit” of which the water was the significant emblem: which Baptism, when the kingdom of God was established should be its initiatory rite of admission, and which he would fully understand hereafter. Accordingly at ver. 22. of the same chapter it is said, “After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea: and there he tarried with them, and baptized.” [See also iv. 1, 2.] And a very few years after at most his meaning receives a full development in the institution of the Sacrament of Baptism; “Go ye therefore, and teach [or disciple] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

In the ancient Church, when the Sacraments were duly estimated, and they continued “daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house;” Acts ii. 46. such a retrospect from light to obscurity would probably have been entertained. In the modern Church where the Sacraments seem not to be regarded with the same portion of esteem as means of grace, such a retrospect is considered by many as more than questionable. The thing signified is admitted, but the Sacramental sign of such signification is denied.

Will not those who hold this text as inapplicable to Baptism do well to pause before they arrive at a peremptory decision, when they consider that when the “fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,” even these simple figures were applicable to Baptism, as they “were all baptised unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea,” 1 Cor. x, 1, 2. And as faith could behold God “figuring thereby” his “holy

holy fear of a faithful Parent, lest by withholding his Child from Baptism, he should at once be guilty of an offence to that which is most dear to him of all his earthly blessings, and to the letter of the word of God.

In presenting these grounds of Infant-baptism, I must repeat what was said in the outset of this Letter, that it is by no means my object to attempt a statement of all the grounds which may be adduced in its favour. The view here given, brief as it is, is quite satisfactory to my own mind, and, as it appears to me, will fully authorise every faithful man to present his Child at the font of Baptismal blessedness, with an assured confidence in the promise of a gracious God, that his Child is thus sealed as “a member of Christ, the Child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.”

The believing Parent who has arrived at the

Baptism,” may not the same faith equally extract a Baptismal meaning from words surrounded by so much more luminous a reference from the time, and circumstances, and persons, at and by which they were uttered?

The text need not be the subject of strife; neither kind of Baptism is dependent on it; and like other similar questions. Baptism rests not its evidence on one text. But I own that the above retrospect seems to me to justify the sense entertained of this passage by the Church for fifteen hundred years, almost without interruption, as applicable to water-baptism, as well as the adoption of this sense by our Church in the large use she makes of this text both in her adult and infant Baptismal Services.

above conclusion respecting Baptism, will select Christian Sponsors and joyfully introduce his Child to the full Congregation, that he may enjoy the prayers and spiritual sympathies of the Church. Most heartily will he join in the antecedent prayers for a blessing on the Sacrament; most earnestly will he dissipate all doubt of a favourable reception; and his Child being privileged with the sign and seal of the sacramental blessing, most ardently will he yield his thanks to the Father of mercies, "that it hath pleased" him to "regenerate" his Infant with his "Holy Spirit, to receive" him "for his own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into" his "holy Church. And while he constantly pleads the promise, he acts like a man who verily believes that it shall be accomplished to him and his Child. He watches his opening faculties, he impresses on him the value of the privileges with which he is invested, he reminds him that the vows of God are upon him, and stimulates him to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith" he is "called." Eph. iv. 1. He sows in hope, and he trusts that he shall be a "partaker of his hope." 1 Cor. ix. 10.

The Christian, who thus presents his Child at the font for Baptism in our Church, wishes not that one word should be altered, either in the Baptismal Service, or in the formularies more immediately connected with it. He can neither part with the fervent supplications for a blessing, nor with the rich and confident ascriptions of praise

for mercies so graciously bestowed and so firmly ratified and sealed; nor would he wish the tone of their expression to be lowered in the smallest degree, for he feels and acts upon this principle, "according to your faith be it unto you." Matt. ix. 29.

It is this principle of faith in the promise that actuates the whole course of the education of his Child. This Child is "a member of Christ," and is to be educated on this persuasion both with respect to his Parent and to himself. His resources therefore are not in himself but in Christ, and he is habitually taught, as a poor impotent sinner, to go out of himself for spiritual strength, and to call upon God "by diligent prayer," i. e. a holy habitual diligence in prayer, for that spiritual power which is sufficient for every occasion, and which is only to be found in Christ: so that as the member retains life no longer than the head influences the body of which it is a part, so it is vain for him to hope for spirituality unless the supply is constantly supported by the grace of Christ. Here is a provision for a holy walk, and a Christian conversation. If the weakness of nature shows itself in idleness, the Parent, acting thus in faith, persuades his Child to call upon God for diligence and attention. If some self-denying duty is to be performed, the Parent will encourage him to hope for ability from God to discharge it. In the commission of faults, he will be taught to lament them as sins, to confess them to God, to



deplore the weakness of his fallen nature, and to ask forgiveness through the merits of that Saviour who is the God of his salvation. And under a due sense of his sinfulness, the Christian Parent will encourage his Child: "For me I am a sinner as you are, and most readily forgive you; it is a light thing for me to do. Your offence is against God: go to him, and ask forgiveness of him." And such a season may be improved into one of deep and lasting impression, if the Parent joins his prayers to those of the Child, and with confession of sins pleads the promises of pardon to every penitent that approaches God in faith, and casts himself on his mercy.

In the habitual renunciation of "the sinful lusts of the flesh," this Christian Parent will not teach his Child to expect happiness from the attainment of any thing that is *exquisite*. The ordinary circumstances, and every-day occurrences of life present but very little to gratify an exquisite taste; they are rather marked by an opposite character, and frequently call for the exercise of self-denial in the toleration of what is mean, and low, and shabby and offensive. Not only does such a mistake in education expose its subject to constant disappointment, repining, and complaint, but also to that wide-wasting pestilence which seems to me to prove the curse of the Church at this time, a fastidious spirit, ever coveting something more and something higher, for which nothing is sufficiently good or sufficiently refined,

and which is equally hostile to *usefulness* in practice and *simplicity* in faith.<sup>1</sup> Much less will such a Parent on whom Baptismal obligations to his Child have any hold, inflame those passions he is bound to controul, by the excitements of theatrical exhibitions, dancing, light and trifling parties of pleasure, novel-reading, and all those loose and fashionable amusements, which directly tend to the undue excitement of passion, rather than to its wholesome restraint, and which in the very teeth of Baptismal requirements seem now to be considered as legitimate accomplishments of the professing Christian world.

Neither were the vows of Baptism considered as valid, could a Parent with any consistency, teach his child to admire “the pomps and vanities of this wicked world,” by gratifying a worldly taste, and by taking him to the exhibition of this pomp in splendid *spectacles*, and the garish display of public festivity, as calculated to excite

<sup>1</sup> It is a question well worth considering, not whether the Belles Lettres, or the accomplishments of literature, should be encouraged ; but *how far* should they be encouraged in an education which regards man as an immortal being, and proposes the honour of God and human usefulness as its aim. Sound principle, just taste, and practical wisdom, are the main ingredients of such a character. Can that which is intensely refined consist with what is practical, and that which is exquisite with that which is useful ? And does not the general fastidiousness of our day, compel us to the deliberate consideration of this question, and counsel us rather to qualify our refinement, than to encourage it ?

his admiration, and to attract his esteem. His respect for the civil and political institutions of his country, will arise from a purer source, and depend on a more solid foundation. That "first commandment with promise," Eph. vi. 2. will assure him that as all his relative duties are performed, so will his "days be long in the land which the Lord" his "God has given" him for a residence during his sojourn upon earth; and as the exercise of his graces, and the discharge of his duties, will be a constant blessing to his country; so his care for the preservation of every private and public blessing will call upon him to defend her from civil commotion from within, and from foreign invasion from without; and his respect for all superior relations will take its rise from that primitive obligation specified by the commandment to "honour his father and mother;" for as he has been taught this first discharge of duty, so may he be expected, in after life, to discharge the other relative duties which embrace the whole circle of his private and public obligations—husband, master and servant, Minister and people, magistrate and subject. He will thus be taught, not to look up to the possession of rank or place with ambitious views of self-aggrandisement, but to be content with that station to which it has pleased God to call him: or should it be the will of God, that he quit the walk of private life for the distinction of public employment, he will accept the office as the instrument of general

usefulness, chiefly desirous to direct his own energies, and those of all within his influence to the promotion of the best interests of mankind, in the spread of the Gospel upon earth.

Invested with the high distinction of "a member of Christ," his Parent will teach him that this is no futile designation, that his privileges are real and substantial, and that the honour of his Saviour demands no equivocal exhibition of them to the world: that neither condition nor circumstance divest him of this prominent character: that with Nebuchadnezzar on the throne, a public and penitent confession of sin is the truest honour of his imperial dignity; or with Joseph in the prison, the most striking declaration of his innocence is that meek and upright deportment, which shall inspire unreserved confidence, and submit the liberty of the prisoner to himself as the reward of his own virtuous conduct. That the mansion and the cottage, the parlour and the kitchen, present various duties, and exercise tempers and appetites and passions from which his character as a "member of Christ" is not suspended even for a moment: that all times, relations, and situations demand his recognition of his own holy and heaven-born designation; and that it is at once his privilege and his calling to "shew out of a good conversation;"—and that conversation embracing the whole field of human usefulness, the whole play of human talent, the unsparing regulation of human temper, and the unabated effort

of human energies—his “works with meekness of wisdom.” James iii. 13.

How different a character then, does education assume, with respect to the Parent’s part, when thus conducted under the sense of Baptismal obligations ! a new class of motives is applied, and a positive attainment of holiness is expected. Under such a system, the wonder will be, not as at present, that a young Child should be really holy, but that a Child thus educated should not be holy. This Christian Parent looks upon his Child really as “a member of Christ,” endeavours to invest him with all the privileges to which he is entitled as “a Child of God ;” and considers that he has an unquestionable title to the inheritance of glory. For this his whole education is intended to qualify him, even to make him “*meet* to be a partaker of the inheritance with the Saints in light.” Col. i. 12.

Only let us substitute the constraining sweetness of the Baptismal promise for the dry authority of the legal precept, and as the principle savours of the mercy of the gospel, the conduct it produces will be the holiness of the Gospel also. Its rich uniting influence will form the firmest cement of attachment between the Parent and the Child. The love of God will originate the love of man ; and while the Parent no longer complains of despised authority, mis-placed confidence, and defeated hopes—the Child conscious of his privileges discharges duty as a pleasure ; to displease his Parent is to displease his God, and this is most displeasing to himself.

## LETTER III.

## THE SPONSOR.

THE Sponsor's warrant to undertake for the Child seems to rest on the same promises which encourage the Parent: the one being the natural, the other the spiritual Parent, the Godfather. And thus King Edward the Sixth's Catechism equally accepts the profession of either. "For the young babes, their Parents' or the church's profession sufficeth."<sup>1</sup> The Sponsor therefore undertakes his duty in faith of the promise, and, according to his opportunities, provides for the spiritual education of the Child. He pleads the promises; he bears his charge upon his heart in prayer; and it is his desire to acquit himself to the Church of the trust she has reposed in his spiritual vigilance, and parental superintendence in Christ.

The institution of Sponsors for the Infant

<sup>1</sup> Fathers of the English Church, ii. 369.



baptised seems to be coeval with Infant-Baptism. It is mentioned by Tertullian one hundred years from the Apostles' times incidentally, as though it were the ordinary practice of the Church.<sup>1</sup> And both the existence and manner of Sponsorship, as practised in the primitive times, are thus detailed by Augustine. 'But I would not have you mistake so as to think that the bond of guilt derived from Adam may not be broken, unless the children be offered for receiving the grace of Christ by their own Parents. For so you speak in your letter, "that as the Parents were authors of the punishment, so they may also by the faith of their Parents be justified." Whereas you see that a great many are offered not by their Parents, but by any other persons. As the infant slaves are sometimes offered by their masters : and sometimes when the Parents are dead, the infants are baptised, being offered by any that can afford to shew this compassion on them. And sometimes infants whom their Parents have cruelly exposed to be brought up by those that light on them, are now and then taken up by the holy virgins, and offered to baptism by them who have no children of their own, nor design to have any. And in all this there is nothing else done than what is written in the Gospel, when our Lord asked who was neighbour to him that was wounded by thieves, and left half dead in the road ? And this was answered, 'He that shewed mercy on him.' '<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wall, i. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. i. 195.

It seems clear from the above extract, not only, as Wall remarks, that both Augustine, and Boniface, to whom he writes, “take it for granted that Infants are to be baptised,” and “that the ordinary use then was for the Parents to answer for their Children;” but that any person, who undertook the charitable work of bringing up the destitute Child, whether the masters of slaves, the friends of orphans adopted, or the holy virgins who educated the exposed Children as their own, in performing an act of charity to the body, performed a still greater act of charity to the soul, by presenting such Infants for the seal of the covenant mercies of the Church in Baptism, of whose pious education they undertook the responsibility. The Church, at that time, committing the spiritual care of the Infant to the person who engaged to be his natural Parent.

And is it an improbable suggestion, that the present requisition of the Church—that the spiritual friends of the family should be received as Sponsors, in preference, or rather in addition, to the natural Parents of the Child—arose from this custom of receiving the natural guardian of the Child as its Sponsor in Baptism? It is in effect the same, whether the Parent appears by himself in person, or by the Sponsor deputed by him. The act of the Sponsor, in presenting the Child, is assumed by the Church as having the sanction of the parent; and on this assumption she acts in confirming the choice of the Parent,

by committing the spiritual interests of the Child to the Sponsor approved by him. The entrusting the Child to the spiritual care of the Sponsor, is, in fact, the work of the Church, who says to every Sponsor as Pharaoh's daughter did to the mother of Moses, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me." Exodus ii. 9. The Church considers the character of the Parent as represented by the Sponsor: his character, as interpreted by his profession, and the office which he voluntarily undertakes before the Congregation, is her security, under God, for the spiritual education of the Infant. To him she commits her charge; he voluntarily accepts the responsibility; and that she may not be disappointed in her hope by the death or default of the parties, she appoints three Sponsors to every Child she receives.

And now, let *prudence* interpret this usage of the Church in the appointment of Sponsors. The Parents, who presented their Infants for Baptism in primitive times, were such as the Church might safely intrust with the superintendence of the young of the flock. Persecution then sifted character, and the hazard of a Christian profession was then a security for its reality. But in process of time, when a Christian profession was established by fashion, as at the present day, it was prudent, as doubtless it was necessary, for the Church to require an additional security: and as the Parent, if truly Christian, would necessarily train up the Child to the consistent enjoyment of

the covenant mercies sealed by his Baptism, and to the discharge of the corresponding duties incumbent on him to perform; so in the defect of the real holiness of the Parent, the Church kindly provided for the spiritual welfare of the Infant, by requiring holy Sponsors to undertake the charge, which according to their opportunities they were expected to fulfil.

And next, let *charity* interpret this usage of the Church in the appointment of Sponsors to her Infants. First in giving the promise its largest interpretation, and assuming that it is made to her and every Infant she receives into her communion; so that not only does each Parent undertake for his baptised Child, not only every particular Sponsor, but every individual of that "Communion of Saints" into which the Child is received, is its spiritual Parent also: and any interpretation of the promise short of this, does not fully invest the Child with the interests and privileges of the spiritual communion into which it is admitted; nor does it give to that "Communion of Saints" the full interest of that affectionate relation in which it stands towards the Child it has adopted. Thus the Child is the child of the Church, and the Sponsor is the particular member of the body, presented by the Parent, and approved by the Church, to which the Church commits her own responsibility of training up the Infant for God.

Let the same blessed charity interpret the usage of the Church in calling upon Sponsors to under-

take their interesting charge. And did the masters of slaves, the voluntary guardians of orphans, and the holy virgins kindly undertake the charitable office of being Sponsors to destitute Infants in that day, and is it a less charitable office for Christians to undertake the same kind responsibility at this? Were unprotected slaves, parentless Infants, and Children exposed to perish, the subjects of holy concern to these primitive believers, and are the Infants of professing Christians at this day, who, but for the interference of some real believer in Christ, are likely to be brought up in nothing better than the formality, and vanity, and worldly-mindedness of their Parents, not equally the subjects of the charitable consideration of Christian Sponsors at this? What is this but the commonest exercise of charity? ‘In all this there is nothing else done (as Augustine well remarks) than what is written in the Gospel, when our Lord asked who was neighbour to him that was wounded by thieves, and left half dead in the road? and it was answered, “He that shewed mercy on him.”

Let us consider the undertaking of the Sponsor in this same light as our Church does, consistently with the view entertained by the Church of old, as a “charitable act,” a kind expression of Christian love, consulting the best interests of the Child baptised, and we shall approach the consideration of our subject with the spirit that it demands.

But first, it is incumbent on us to remark the too general negligence of those who undertake

this solemn office. And here, My Dear Friend, I find myself so deeply involved in this general charge of neglect, that were not the cause of truth paramount to that of private feeling, a sense of my own negligence would induce me to be wholly silent on this subject. But I must indeed acknowledge, not only that "I am not better than my Fathers," Kings xix. 4, but that Tamar is "more righteous than I:" Gen. xxxviii. 26—and I would be so far from taking refuge under the broad shield of universal delinquency, that as our return to what is right must be individual before it can be general, so I am desirous that my particular share in the commission of this evil may meet with its particular share of reparation. And it is my fervent prayer, that a ten-fold clearer view of the advantages of Baptism than I entertain, and a ten-fold deeper impression of the mischiefs which result from our neglect of them than I feel, may be entertained and felt by every member of our Established Church; that a proportionate degree of reparation may be made to our Church, by the increased vigilance and more active superintendence of her Sponsors, and thus her children become really possessed of the spiritual blessings which are their unquestionable birthright.

May I therefore assume, and lament the fact as indisputable, that the duties of this solemn office of Sponsor, have sunk into general desuetude among us? That some consider the mere under-



taking of the duty in private, or at the font, as all that the office demands—that some politely comply with it as the receipt of a compliment—that others accept the offer, or make it, as an earnest of subsequent favourable testamentary dispositions towards the baptised,—and that even those who deem the promises they have made for the Child as important, yet show a very inadequate sense of this importance by any after attention they may bestow on their charge. Nay, is it not yet further notorious, that many conscientious Churchmen hesitate to undertake the office of Sponsor at all, under their impression of the weight of the duties, the performance of which it implies; and that such can only be persuaded to become Sponsors to children of decidedly pious Parents, under the condition often expressed, and oftener implied, that the Parents will be responsible for the education of the Child, and thus disengage them from the due discharge of their office? In these different ways, whether from ignorance, fashion, or, shall I say, mistaken principle, it is but too evident that the office of Sponsor becomes a dead letter, a name without a thing.

Or put the case in another way: let it be supposed that Parents as generally required of the Godfathers and Godmothers of their Children, the serious performance of the duties which so solemn a name imports, as they are at present negligent in making such requirement. That “after” the “promise made by Christ,” their Infant should

“ also faithfully for his part, promise by his Sureties (until he come of age to take it upon himself) that he will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God’s holy word, and obediently keep his commandments :” and that before their entrance upon such office, a solemn engagement was required of the Sponsors, that they would periodically examine their charge, as to his religious progress, and generally interest themselves in his spiritual welfare, more especially remembering him in their prayers. Could we, in the utmost latitude of charity, believe that such offer would be generally acceptable? Rather as Sponsors now act, would not such a requirement, viz. to discharge the duties of the office, be the most certain inducement with such Sponsors to decline the acceptance of it?

To what a lamentable state then, is the office of Sponsor reduced among us, when it is generally undertaken on the assumption that it is a sinecure; and when even conscientious men engage in it, on the condition that the Parents are virtually responsible for the charge, while they themselves are free from the obligation of their own promises and vows.

But can we subscribe to this decision of good and pious men on this subject? Are they not attending more to their fears than their faith? And is this the line of conduct which faith demands of them in our present juncture of spiritual depression? “ By whom shall Jacob arise,” Amos vii. 5.

if those, who are most eminently qualified to assist him, shrink in the hour of difficulty, appalled by a mischief, the very extent of which should form one of their strongest motives to exertion? To whom can spiritual responsibility be reasonably confided but to spiritual men? If Baptism be any thing more than a ceremony, who shall rightly appreciate its value, and teach others rightly to appreciate it, but spiritual men? Who shall practically confute that wide-wasting position, that "every externally baptised person is necessarily regenerated;" but the man, who practically shows, that it is the wildest enthusiasm to expect the end without using the means; and that to instruct a Child that he is enjoying the privilege of "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," while no care is taken, that he shall really renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, vitally believe in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, readily obey the will of God, and habitually walk in his laws—is the most cruel delusion, and can terminate in nothing but the most hopeless disappointment? Who, but the tried soldier of Christ, shall courageously oppose the evil prevalence of a perverted Sacrament, mischievous almost as the mass itself, and recover the professing Protestant world to the sound conviction, that "if the Lord be" our "God," we must "follow him;" and if Christ be our Saviour, we must "manfully fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and continue

Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to our life's end? "

And if this declining of good men to accept the office of Sponsor be an evidence of weak faith in the promise of God, is it not, as might be expected, the evidence of a cold and calculating charity also? Had such men accompanied Gregory through the streets of Rome, when the helpless state of some of our British ancestors, publicly exposed to sale as slaves, attracted his Christian regard, would they not have rejoiced in the ability to have given liberty to the bodies of their captive countrymen? And if that ability had extended to the purchase of one or more of those interesting children, would they not have rejoiced to have introduced them into the Christian Church by Baptism,—willingly have undertaken the responsibility of educating them according to the requisition of the Church in Christian principles and Christian practice,—and have deemed it the most acceptable exercise of charity, to have been thus instrumental in saving souls from death, and in investing them with all the privileges of a Christian communion, ever pleading the divine promise in prayer for the accomplishment of so desirable an object? Ecclesiastical history records that it was among the brightest exercises of primitive charity for Christians to liberate unhappy slaves from their bondage; and doubtless, in addition to corporeal liberty, they endeavoured to communicate to them that richer liberty of the soul from

the thralldom of sin. And were African and New Zealand children at this time exposed for sale as slaves in the streets of London, would not really Christian men delight in emancipating such both from corporeal and spiritual bondage? And where is the difference? Can we cast our eyes around the streets of our vast metropolis, or indeed throughout the cities, and towns, and villages of the land, without discovering, as it were, at every step, objects who should excite similar pity, and who really need the same commiserating attention—"baptised Infidels," baptised worldlings, baptised ignorants, baptised formalists, baptised profligates, baptised of all descriptions of sinners, who instead of renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil, exhibit in too glowing colours the very characters which drew tears from the eyes of an Apostle; who under a Christian profession "WALK as enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things?" Phil. iii. 18, 19. Surely, My Dear Friend, as it is no charity to shut our eyes upon truth, so wide a waste of moral barrenness and spiritual death may well excite the most awakened feelings of every real Christian, and call forth that charity, the distinguishing character of which is to promote the everlasting interest of the soul.

But I think I hear it said, the cases are widely different: a slave redeemed would be wholly in my own power; I might either take him into my

family, or so dispose of him as to ensure my frequent superintendence of his life : but constituted as society is among us, the Child for whom I engage as Sponsor, must necessarily be under the tutelage of his own Parents and Guardians, so that I cannot know enough of his habits and conduct, to justify my undertaking the training of them.

But may not this objection be met by the following considerations ? Should you be requested by a friend to accept the office of Sponsor to his Child, you are surely justified in accepting it on your own conditions : and may not this Sponsorial right of interference be proposed as a necessary condition of such acceptance ? or should you voluntarily engage in the office, may not the offer be accompanied by the above terms ? or without any conditions expressed, may it not be undertaken under the assumption, that your claims conscientiously to discharge the duties of Sponsor will be allowed ? And after all, should a more active interference be discouraged in the education of your charge, you may supply books ; you may avail yourself of such opportunities as present themselves ; and should a total exclusion from his person be the consequence of your benevolent endeavours, still he cannot be excluded from an interest in your prayers. You may then sit down, with the conviction, that, what charity could do, you have done, and are doing : that to do what you can is the limit of charitable ability—" Let



her alone—she hath done what she could :” Mark xiv. 6, 8. that to give what you have is the measure of its means—“ Silver and gold have I none ; but such as I have give I thee : in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk :” Acts iii. 6. and, that the design of charity, and not the success of its exertions, is the real gauge of its perfection—“ ready to distribute—willing to communicate.” 1 Tim. vi. 18. Never let it be forgotten, that it is the character of real charity not so much to calculate on difficulties which may obstruct, as on possibilities which may encourage : and that it is also the character of that genuine faith which gives charity its birth, to sink mountains of difficulty into plains of encouragement, while it brightens dark and distant possibilities into the clearer and nearer assurances of attainment. Shrink not then discouraged and paralised by unbelief, O doubting Christian, from this blessed labour of love ; engage in it on the warrant and encouragement of the divine precept and promise ; use the appointed means ; avail yourself of the opportunities, which the God of mercy presents to you in his providence ; and call down a blessing on your exertions by your faithful prayers, and success shall assuredly be your reward.

Nor can I omit to suggest the large encouragement which our Church gives to Sponsors. First the efficacy of fervent prayer according to the promise, “ ask and ye shall have,” which she thus pleads ; “ So give now unto us that ask ; let us

that seek, find ; open the gate unto us that knock ; that this Infant may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord."

The Church next, as I apprehend, concentrates the force of all the promises made to believing Parents or Sponsors with respect to their children, in that one gracious act of our Lord, his kind invitation, and reception of young Children, as recorded by St. Mark x. 13. by a special enumeration of the particulars of so interesting a transaction. First, here are "the words of our Saviour Christ" himself ; these words are no less than a command ; "that he commanded the children to be brought unto him : he even blamed those that would have kept them from him : " he proposes their loveliness, their docility, and simplicity as the very sum of gracious attainment, as the pattern of heavenly qualification. "He exhorteth all men to follow their innocency." Nor was this all : for this declaration of "his good will" toward them he confirmed "by his outward gesture and deed ; " for "he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them." After this accumulation of blessing, so fully, so variously expressed by our Lord, what possible room can there be for doubt and hesitation, that he is less willing now to receive "young children" to the arms of his benevolence, and to confer his blessing upon them, than he was "in the days of his flesh ?"

“Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe,” ye kind and feeling and faithful believers, who are introducing and receiving this Child into the Church of Christ, in expectation of a blessing—Doubt ye not, that he will accept this work of faith and labour of love: no, rather be assured, that as of old, so he will now, “likewise favourably receive this present Infant; that he will embrace him with the arms of his mercy; that he will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom.” Then the Church expresses a persuasion of God’s good-will towards the Child presented, and concurs with the Sponsors, and by them the Parents, in one general ascription of praise to God for the same. “Wherefore we—Minister—Sponsors—and Parents if present, (and what Parent if able to attend would decline so interesting a scene) and all the Church present—being thus persuaded of the good-will of our heavenly Father towards this infant, declared by his Son Jesus Christ,” (for this one act of Christ in receiving Children, and blessing them, is the great confirmatory declaration of all the Father’s promises to them)—“and nothing doubting, but that he favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing this infant to his holy baptism, let us FAITHFULLY and devoutly give thanks unto him,” &c.

I cannot but remark on the above exhortation, how the Church insists on faith in the promise, as the means of any benefit to be derived to the

Child about to be baptised. "Doubt ye not therefore, but" on the contrary, "earnestly believe"—"We being thus persuaded"—"nothing doubting"—"faithfully give thanks"—for the Church well knows that as a man is persuaded of the reality of a promise, so will he use the means to secure its blessings.

After this offering of praise follows a special address to the Sponsors, or Godfathers and Godmothers, recapitulating the subjects of their foregoing prayers, and the Gospel-promise that those prayers shall be granted; again supporting their faith with the never-to-be-forgotten suggestion, "which promise, he [Christ] for his part will most surely keep and perform." Then *follows*, the requisition to the Sponsors that they will promise as the "sureties" of the Infant, "that he will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commandments."

We may observe on this address, that it first reminds the Sponsors of the spiritual blessings they have prayed for, and of the promise on which their expectation of them is founded: clearly insisting still on the great principle that pervades the Service, that all Baptismal blessings are grounded on the Gospel, and not on the Law; that God's promise of mercy to the Child, precedes the Child's engagement to be obedient to God; that God's mercy depends not on the obedience of the Child, but that the obedience of the

Child flows from a sense of the mercy of God to it. “ *Wherefore after* this promise made by Christ, this Infant must also faithfully for his part, promise by you that are his Sureties,” &c,—“ *Wherefore,*” i. e. in consequence of this promise of Christ, the Sureties are both obliged and encouraged to promise obedience for the Child. The Catechism observes the same order ; first the Child is taught that at his Baptism he “ was made a member of Christ,” &c. then the promises made for him. The Confirmation Service recognises this order : the Bishop, in his opening prayer, gratefully addressing God, “ who has vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins :” here their justification and regeneration, are faithfully and thankfully admitted, and on that admission is grounded further prayer for strength and increase of grace. Thus as Baptismal blessings are the result of mercy, Baptismal obedience is the obedience of faith.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This view of adoption as introductory to sanctification is beautifully described by perhaps the most spiritual of the Reformers, Bradford. “ Oh ! how faint is faith in me ! how little is love to thee or thy people, how great is self-love, how hard is my heart ! &c. By the reason whereof I am moved to doubt of thy goodness towards me, whether thou art my father or no, and whether I be thy child or no. Indeed worthily might I doubt if that the having of these were the *causes* and not the *fruits* rather of thy children. The cause why thou art my Father, is, thy mercy, goodness, grace, and truth

Thus encouraged, the Sponsors solemnly engage “in the name of” the Child, to renounce sin, and all its abettors, to believe the Gospel, and to obey the Law. After which, the whole Church joins in four distinct and most fervid supplications ; that every spiritual blessing may be imparted to the Child, now about to be introduced to their communion. Then follows the prayer for the consecration of the element of Baptism, concluding that with the sign the baptised may receive the

in Christ Jesus, the which cannot but remain for ever. In respect whereof thou hast borne me this good-will, to accept me into the number of thy children, that I might be holy, faithful, obedient, innocent, &c. And therefore thou wouldest not only make me a creature after thy image, enduing me with sight, limbs, shape, form, memory, wisdom, &c. ; where thou mightest have made me a beast, a maimed creature, lame, blind, frantic, &c ; but also thou wouldest that I should be born of Christian parents, brought into thy church by baptism, and called divers times by the ministry of thy word into thy kingdom, besides the innumerable other benefits always hitherto poured upon me ; all which thou hast done of this thy good will, that thou of thine own mercy barest to me in Christ and for Christ before the world was made ; the which thing, as thou requirest straitly that I should believe without doubting, so in all my needs that I should come unto thee as a Father, and make my moan without mistrust of being heard in thy good time, as most shall make to my comfort. Lo ! therefore to thee, dear Father, I come, through thy Son our Lord, Mediator, and Advocate Jesus Christ, who sitteth on thy right hand, making intercession for me, and pray thee of thy great goodness and mercy in Christ to be merciful unto me, that I may feel indeed thy sweet mercy as thy child.” *Fathers of the English Church. Vol. vi. p. 330.*



thing signified also,—“the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children.” The Church assumes, that the Child is one of God’s “faithful and elect children” in virtue of the promise, and she prays that he may ever “remain” one of that truly blessed, and highly privileged company.

The Minister then proceeds, formally to invest the Child with this designation as a Christian, and to confer on him the sign, and seal, and pledge, of his Baptismal privileges; pronouncing the name bestowed on the Child as a Christian, and calling upon him the name of the Triune Jehovah, baptising him “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Then presenting the Child before the assembled Church, the Minister declares in the name of all present: “We receive this Child into the congregation of Christ’s flock;” he then confers on him the badge of his profession; “and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that,” in the midst of a world ashamed of its Saviour, “hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified,” but decidedly, boldly and resolutely encounter the foes of Christ, “manfully fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil;” and that he shall persist in this holy warfare to the last gasp of his earthly being, “and continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end.” And this interesting reception declared by the Minister, is confirmed by the

express approbation of the whole Church.  
“Amen.”

The Child being thus “regenerated, and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church,” the Congregation is exhorted to “give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord,” as a congregational act, to make their prayers unto him, “that the Child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.”

And here, I do not see, how any one can conscientiously join with the Church, in the following praise and prayer, who declines to give the full import to those fervent expressions which they fairly and honestly convey. According to the view I have already taken of the privileges conferred by this Sacrament on the faithful, with what perfect accordance, what unreserved and unbosomed thankfulness, what a sincere effusion of holy gratitude will the faithful Parent, and Sponsor, and believer unite in those expressions of praise: “We give thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father,” first, “that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit,” not to confer on him the sign only, but the thing signified also—not to impart the seal only, but to bestow an earnest of the blessings sealed—not only to wash the Child with the outward emblem of water, but inwardly to communicate that grace of the Holy Spirit which cleanses from sin. Secondly, “to receive him for thine own Child by adoption;” not merely to give him a Christian name,

and to enroll him nominally among thy children, but really and truly to receive him into thy family of grace, as “thine own” adopted child, of which thou hast given an assurance by regenerating him by thy Holy Spirit. “And to incorporate him into thy holy Church;” to which body, he is as vitally united by faith, as the member constitutes a part of the body, and with which he really holds communion in virtue of thy blessing on the Sponsorial engagements now undertaken for him. And since this Child is now “dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and is buried with Christ in his death, we humbly beseech thee to grant that,” he may have grace to perfect the work thus graciously begun, that he “may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that as he is” now “made partaker of the death of thy Son, he may also be partaker of his resurrection, so that finally, with the residue of thy holy Church, he may be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom, through Christ our Lord.”

I cannot but remark here, that he who views our Baptismal Service in the light that I have represented it, would not willingly alter one of the above expressions; he would not qualify one word, or lower one of these rich and rapturous specifications of blessings conferred. The terms are admirably adapted to express the awakened feelings of a believing soul—the combined sentiments and graces, of love and joy and gratitude and praise.

Then follows, if I may so say, the system of Christian education, expressed by our Church, in a few short hints, which do indeed contain the pith and essence of all just education, conducted on Christian principles. No modern system can supersede this; it may explain, it may expand it, it may build on it as a foundation, but where is the modern treatise of education, that can pretend to come up to the purity and simplicity of these few short hints? Admired as some of them may have been, does not the very best fall much below these plain and spiritual directions? and may we not ascribe the comparatively low tone of even the best of modern systems, though written to recommend a Christian education, to the authors of them setting up a model of their own, instead of availing themselves of that already provided for them in the formularies of our Church? I give them full credit for their benevolent designs, and well-intentioned endeavours: but they have set up a standard of their own; and by bringing that of the Church into neglect, it may be questioned whether they have not brought it into contempt also. The total and unsparing renunciation of all sin, and the persevering cultivation of all holiness, as a delightful privilege as well as a necessary duty—this is the animating system of our Church, which stamps it with a truly Gospel character, which gives energy to faith, animation to hope, perseverance to love, and joy to duty. It grounds

all its education on a sense of a divine mercy ; it despatches the Sponsor to his interesting work, relying on the promise of God; and it sends forth the weak and helpless Child into the field of warfare, against the flesh, the world, and the devil, as “ a member of Christ,” safe in his protection, and secure of victory, in the strength of “ him that loved ” him, “ and gave himself for ” him. Gal. ii. 20.

The Sponsors then, having been encouraged, throughout the whole of the Service, by the promises ; and having been repeatedly desired not to doubt, but earnestly to believe them, and to give them the largest credit, the Church in her concluding exhortation reminds them of the promises they have made for the Child, and suggests certain particulars as to the mode of carrying these promises into effect. “ Forasmuch as this child hath promised by you his Sureties to renounce the devil, and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve him ; ye must remember that it is your parts and duties to see that this Infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he hath here made by you.” The first subject the Child is to be instructed in, so soon as he can comprehend it, is his Baptismal obligations—the covenant of mercy he is under, and what his Godfathers and Godmothers undertook for him in his Baptism. And how strong a hold on his conscience, would his Parents, and Sponsors, and

Minister have, were he duly instructed in the solemnity of the vow he had made, of the awfulness of the promise in which he had engaged, the publicity, and sanctity of the profession he had witnessed, and the privilege of believing, and doing all that was then promised for him. Here attachment to our Church as a holy communion would begin; it would not rest on fashion, and custom, and loose and vacillating habit, but on reasonable and intelligible grounds of the blessedness and the privilege of the state and communion into which he was called. A Child may be deeply interested by the Sponsor's reading to him, in a simple and engaging manner, the particulars of the Baptismal Service; explaining to him the important work he then undertook for him, and distinctly calling upon him to observe and give effect to the promises then made; reminding him how he stands committed to Christ, to his Sponsors, and to the whole Church, for his due observance of the same.

To render this teaching effectual, the Sponsors are further admonished, "And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons." He is next to frequent the Church, into the Congregation of which he was initiated at his Baptism; and this, not only to enjoy the Christian communion there, so far as he is able, but also for the purpose of his further "instruction in righteousness," (2 Tim. iii. 16.) by "hearing sermons." And this is no unintel-



ligible intimation of what the Church expects the sermons of her ministers should be composed,—even of such materials as a Child may profit by, not of long and wearisome sentences which fatigue the attention, not of dry disquisition and uninteresting detail: but of plain and simple expressions, arresting the attention by forcible appeals to the conscience, winning exhibitions of Christian privileges, and pressing invitations of Gospel mercy and love. Of course there must be many things in every sermon above the comprehension of a Child; but the great leading character of a Church of England sermon, as here intimated by our Church, is, that in its general matter and manner, its simplicity should engage the attention of a Child. And what subject but that of the mercy of God to sinners in Christ Jesus, the special gift of a Saviour equally necessary to sinful Child as to sinful man, affords that plain, and direct, and intelligible, and interesting path that can attract the attention even of a Child, and that “the way-faring men, though fools,” should “not err therein.” Isai. xxxv. 8.

But there is yet a more special provision made for the Child’s instruction: “and chiefly ye shall provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue.” These three particulars constitute the substance of what every Christian Child is “bound to believe and to do.” The Church Catechism at first consisted but of these three particulars,

with the introductory questions and answers on Baptism, the concluding portion on the Sacraments not having been added till some years after : and I apprehend, that, this is “ the Short Catechism ” mentioned in the opening address of the Confirmation Service, in contradistinction to the longer, or King Edward’s Catechism, which “ all school-masters ” were enjoined “ truly and diligently to teach in ” their “ schools, immediately after the other brief catechism already set forth.” And let these great principles of faith and practice be but duly and perseveringly inculcated by an interesting mode of instruction, as recommended by the Bishop of London to the clergy of his diocese,<sup>1</sup> and let but the more expanded detail of Christian doctrine and practice contained in Nowell’s or King Edward’s Catechism “ immediately ” follow, “ after the other brief Catechism,” as is enjoined, and what an intelligent, ready, and as we might trust, holy communion of her youth might our Church present to every Bishop for Confirmation,—a communion, which might animate him in the discharge of duties, however fatiguing, and on which he might look with heavenly complacency as the loveliest exercise of his office.

This chief and main provision for the Child’s instruction contains the “ Creed,” or the leading Articles of that faith which he is to believe,—the

<sup>1</sup> Charge of 1822, page 27.—Now Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. Aug. 1839.

“Ten Commandments,” or the will of God with respect to man, which is to form his practice;—and the “Lord’s Prayer,” which asks for every temporal and spiritual blessing, and the bestowment of that grace, without which he can neither effectually believe the Gospel nor acceptably practise the Law. Sound, solid, and persevering instruction in these three great branches of divinity, conducted in faith and prayer, with the blessing of God, must form the enlightened and efficient believer. And were “all Fathers, Mothers, Masters, Dames,” and Sponsors, earnestly and affectionately to persevere in this mode of instructing the Children of the Church, with what hope might they be sent to “the Curate of every Parish, upon Sundays and Holidays,” for open instruction in the Church: and how might the faith and love of the assembled Church be animated towards these little ones, in whose favour its prayers and sympathies had been already engaged by the previous introduction of Baptism!

Then follows a most important clause. The Sponsor is to provide that the Child may learn “all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul’s health.” The soul, the immortal soul, is the great subject of a Christian education; and all knowledge and all faith are to be so imparted as they may tend to promote the spiritual health of the immortal soul. And is this the object proposed in the general education of children? Survey the whole range of education

among us, whether domestic, private, or public—whether in the family, at school, or at college, and are the main interests of an immortal soul principally regarded? Is all instruction regularly and designedly arranged upon this consideration? “The work we have undertaken is to train up an immortal soul for heaven, and all merely human instruction must be subordinated, and be only auxiliary to this grand leading object?” Is the Child systematically brought up for earth or for heaven? Are his desires sharpened upon the whetstone of human selfishness, or is he taught the hard duty of self-denial for his soul’s sake? Is he taught to prefer the praise of God to the praise of men? Is he instructed to esteem all things truly valuable, as they are really useful; and that as he is holy, he is indeed happy?

That the “soul’s health” is not the chief object of general education, is sufficiently obvious to every candid observer. Were this the case, the Bible, in its original, as well as in its translations, would become the basis of instruction, and all other knowledge would be imparted with reference to it. The Greek and Roman Classics would serve as striking illustrations of its great truths, and the veneration now excited for mere learning, would receive its proper level from a comparison with this standard of intellectual and moral perfection. The different branches of human knowledge would, thus subordinated, be taught with the view of forming those paramount and solid excellences of

character, which would prepare the man for future usefulness, and gird up the loins of his mind for the conscientious discharge of every relative obligation. Then not the excitements of the imagination, but the cultivation of the judgment would be a main object proposed; and man, immortal man, as related to God and his neighbour, would be placed before the youthful mind, as he is represented in history sacred and profane, rather than as he is misrepresented in the fictions of Poets, and the reveries of Philosophers: and it would be systematically shown, that all the hypotheses of the schools, and the figments and schemes of unchristian moralists and statesmen for the amelioration of their species, are mere childish folly, and weak delusion, and empty pretence, when compared with those three simple formularies, which are proposed as the ground work of every Christian's education, "The Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer," as exhibited in the one authentic record of immutable truth; and that the one plain and simple doctrine of Christ crucified has done more to bless our species, has shed abroad more wisdom, more truth, more peace, more blessing, than all the collective principles and efforts of heathen learning and heathen power. Then human wisdom, and human prudence, the two fairest daughters of nature, would become the willing hand-maids of grace. Then all that is lovely in personal character, all that is excellent in relative life, and every advance that man can make

in domestic, social, civil, political, national, and international happiness, as well as the universal happiness of his species, would be seen intimately connected with the spread of the three simple Catechetical formularies of his childhood. Then it would be found that the feeble, incomplete, hasty, half-measured, partial, and often contradictory enactments of human legislatures; and the inconsistencies and perplexities which attend the administration of every merely human code, would be rectified as men regarded the exquisitely simple requisitions of the divine law; which in its first statute, that enjoining the duty of man to man, promises a happy and peaceful life to every one who, in the fear of God, discharges the whole round of his relative duties, whether superior or inferior, which it illustrates by, and bottoms on that first relation in which every man is found—his relation as a Child to his Parents—which in its second statute secures the *person* of man, by forbidding the entertainment of any one feeling of hatred in the mind, which, if permitted to issue in act, might deprive that person of life, or interrupt its well-being—which in its third statute provides for the domestic happiness of man in his *family*, and forbids the pruriency of those carnal passions, which would most effectually interrupt the peace of the family, in snapping asunder the conjugal bond by the abduction of an adulterous Parent—which in its fourth statute secures the *property* of man, by forbidding every straggling desire that



might issue in depriving his fellow-man of his property by stealth: stealth being the utmost expression of covetousness that man can exercise against the property of his neighbour, as murder is the most intense expression of hatred against his person—which in its fifth statute provides for the *reputation* of man, by forbidding all flattery as well as detraction, and every intimation inconsistent with the strictest truth—and which in its sixth and last provision for the moral welfare of mankind, applies itself to the fountain of evil, and forbids the embryo desire of what belongs to our neighbour in our hearts.

What is all human legislation when compared with this exquisitely brief but finished table of statute law? It is usual to admire the code of Napoleon for its intelligible and lucid arrangement; but here is a code, which, whether for brevity or comprehension, which for exquisite arrangement and intelligible precision, exceeds every known effort of legislation on earth. We commend the study of Political Economy, but what are all the projects of mere Political Economy compared with this?—a Moral Economy which, originating in the charities of domestic life, gradually expands those charities through the whole circle of human relations, and knows no termination till it has mixed with all the sympathies and wants of suffering and sinful man. It is a Universal Economy, which being grounded on the four first fundamental statutes, man's duty

to God, is engaged in promoting the interests and advancing the happiness of his creatures, not only as those interests and that happiness are connected with time, but as they are connected with eternity also. And viewed through the Gospel, what an inestimable advantage has this over every human code ! This does not merely enact what is “ holy, just and good,” it provides ability to perform also : it does not merely demand, it provides compliance with its own demands. The everlasting Gospel, contained in the Articles of our Creed, provides a power to perform the Law, from the constraining love of Christ to the soul ; and prayer is annexed for grace, from the fountain of grace, by which every needful help is supplied, to enable us to do that “ which by nature we cannot do.” And now let the warmest benevolence, the most matured judgment, and the most enraptured imagination, apply themselves to pourtray a finished state of human society ; let a Republic, a Utopia, or any other political device, exhibit the best and most perfect designs of Plato or More, or of the most gifted philanthropist, to ameliorate the condition of their species, yet how pitifully do they fail ! And for this plain reason, because “ the soul’s health ” is not the leading object of their systems. Whereas Christianity, by uniting man to God by the bonds of faith, animates him to obedience by the constraining influence of love. It gives a simple law which respects the regulation of the

inmost thought of the soul, it supplies a desire and an ability to observe this law, and it opens a channel of divine communion between the soul and its God, which, in return for every ascending confession of defect, and humble petition for supply, readily conveys infinitely more than the lips of man can express, or the soul of man can desire.

Were "the soul's health," then ever to become the object of education; according to this great Baptismal injunction, it is evident that our present mode of general instruction must receive a materially new character. Then ideas would not be imparted for the sake of teaching language, but language would be taught for the sake of imparting ideas. Then false sentiments would be rectified with more assiduity than false grammar is corrected. Then this leading axiom of morals that—MEN ARE AS THEIR PRINCIPLES,—would pervade and animate the whole circle of relative life, from the Legislature to the lowest subject of its enactments. Then gifts would be subordinated to graces, what is useful would be preferred to what is garish, what is pious to what is accomplished. Then a Tutor would find the measure of his excellences not in the extent of mere knowledge, but in the ardour of that piety, which gives to competent knowledge its most spiritual effect; and the ability of a Schoolmaster would be estimated by his skill in ascertaining individual character, in adapting his instruction

to the peculiar genius and talent of each scholar, and in improving the natural powers and attainments of each to the greatest good of men, and the highest glory of God.<sup>1</sup>

It is gratifying to the spirit groaning under the errors and miseries of our present relaxed condition of society, to contemplate that ameliorated state of human existence to which education, directed with this one simple aim "the soul's health," must necessarily elevate our country; and in that elevation become a blessing to man-

<sup>1</sup> Locke, in "Some thoughts concerning education," expresses himself strongly on this subject. "Reading, and Writing, and Learning, I allow to be necessary, but yet not the chief business. I imagine you would think him a very foolish fellow, that should not value a virtuous, or a wise man, infinitely before a great Scholar. Not but that I think Learning a great help to both in well-disposed minds; but yet it must be confessed also, that in others not so disposed, it helps them only to be the more foolish, or worse men. I say this, that when you consider of the breeding of your Son, and are looking out for a Schoolmaster, or a Tutor, you would not have (as is usual) Latin and Logic only in your thoughts. Learning must be had, but in *the second place*, as subservient only to greater qualities. Seek out somebody, that may know how discreetly to frame his manners. Place him in hands, where you may, as much as possible secure his innocence, cherish and nurse up the good, and gently correct, and weed out any bad inclinations, and settle in him good habits. This is the main point, and this being provided for, Learning may be had into the bargain, and that, as I think, at a very easy rate, by methods that may be thought on." pp. 26<sup>3</sup>—9.

kind. Whence do all our corruptions that are so loudly and feelingly lamented arise? Simply from defect of principle; and what is real principle but the fear of God? that concern for eternal things which is associated with the "health of the soul." Interest men steadily for the health of their own souls, and you have a principle in action which must improve every earthly occasion and purpose to the advancement of those higher interests which affect themselves as well as the whole species to which they belong. Then, indeed, not in the fictions of poets, but in the clear prediction of prophecy, in the certain progress of the design of Almighty mercy, and in the infallible verity of the divine promise, a more perfect dispensation of human society would arise. And with this general complexion of improvement all our public and private Institutions would receive a corresponding character. Then there would be no question about Reform in the Legislature or in the Church, it would as certainly take place from the reformation of private principle, as the best wheat sown in the earth produces a crop of the same excellence as its seed. Then every measure of Government, as it was dictated by the love of the people, would meet with the grateful acceptance of those for whom it was designed. Then the laws of a country must necessarily be simplified, for they would be few and simple. Its criminal code would not be written in blood, for where the "soul's health "

is duly estimated, human life is ever precious. The interference of Law in many of the ordinary transactions of life would cease to be intrusive and onerous; and the tyranny of Selfishness and Cunning would not force the letter beyond its evident design. The administration of the laws would be unfettered by questionable precedents, and unembarrassed by litigation and chicane, and Justice and Equity might occupy the same Bench. Then Trade would be conducted on the most liberal as well as the most equitable principles; it would then appear how strikingly selfishness defeats itself by restricting the free barter of the products of nature and art by exclusive imposts and forbidding duties; and that the more unobstructed the interchange might be of those superfluities with which a bounteous Providence has enriched each respective country, the greater the abundance both of national and universal blessings. And this reign of liberal commerce once established, wars of national aggrandizement would cease; discoveries for mere increase of territory would be no more, and the invasion of civilized or uncivilized man to deprive him of freedom of person or property, would yield to the blessed experience that Justice is preferable to Force, Honesty to Fraud, Liberality to Exclusion, and the kind confidence of peace to the distrustful suspicions of war. Nor would rapacity and cruelty and the sacrifice both of the natural and spiritual interests of men to mere gain be the



reproach of commercial enterprise ; but “ the soul’s health ” being associated with it, it would be found that the improving interests of the body were proportioned to the improving interests of the soul. Then Agriculture would be freed from the charge of oppression and unfeeling selfishness in the employer, and from ignorance and improvidence in the employed. The light of truth would then break in upon the most inaccessible retirement of rustic life, and convince its occupant that justice makes no man poor, that liberality secures industry, fidelity, and honesty, and that the best charity consists in rendering the poor independent of it.<sup>1</sup> The Farmer would then learn both the responsibility and the privilege of the influence with which his station in society invests him. Like the family of a Patriarch, the dependents of his house would share the blessings of his abundance ; and every field, the cultivation of which too frequently groans under the curses of hopeless pauperism, would then smile in truly blessed fertility, under the watering of those prayers which would as naturally follow the share, as the share follows the animal that draws it. The unnatural anomaly of legalized compulsory charity would then cease ; industry by receiving its best wages, independence, would supersede the necessity of legislative interference between

<sup>1</sup> It was a saying of the first Earl of Orrery, “ That the greatest charity consisted in keeping people from needing it.”

men; and charity, free as the operations of that Spirit which imparted this crowning grace to the soul, being left to the unfettered play of its own diffusiveness would assuage every genuine woe, and supply every real want. The impostor would be abashed, the indolent stimulated, the indifferent interested, the careless would be roused to attention, and the patience of the real sufferer from below, meeting the ready hand of active benevolence from above, the whole mass of human suffering would be alleviated and assuaged. But unless our moral reformation were conducted with a prevailing and paramount regard “to the soul’s health;” though Reform took place through every varied gradation of rank and station among us, from the Legislature to the lowest night-cellar in our crowded metropolis, the present abode of designing worthlessness, and meditative crime,—the social chord, though strung to the most exquisite pitch of moral harmony, would quickly lose its tension, and having no stay to maintain it, would speedily revert to its wonted state of discord and disorder. A well-principled people are alone fit for Reform;<sup>1</sup> let the people once

<sup>1</sup> This sentence was written in the year 1826, before Reform had taken place. And surely the experience of the intervening years has amply confirmed its truth. I conceive that in the degree that the Church had sanctified the State, in that very degree would the people have been qualified for Reform. And in the very degree that the people have been unsanctified by the practical suppression of the great prin-

be prepared to receive it, and in the necessary process of human circumstance it must infallibly establish itself. But how are the people to be brought to this state? By listening to that Church to which they profess to belong: by reforming the education of all ranks, and CHIEFLY PROVIDING that all “ may learn all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to HIS SOUL’S HEALTH.”

I must entreat you, My Dear Friend, to pardon the detention which this rapid survey of society,

ciples of the Reformation, in that very degree have they departed from the principles of the Established Church, by mistaking morality for spirituality, and orthodoxy for evangelism; by manifold schism and dissent; by the still more erratic mischiefs of Arianism, Socinianism, and Popery within the Church: and by Deism, Infidelity, Liberalism, Socialism, and Atheism without it. And I conceive that the whole mischief has arisen from the fundamental error first mentioned, of mistaking morality for spirituality, and orthodoxy for evangelism: and this preaching and practising the Law for the Gospel, has been the fruitful parent of all the above-recited family of plagues now preying on our moral vitals. It is quite clear that a Reform in the principles and discipline of the Church must precede all effectual Reform in the State. To admit citizens to enlarged civil privileges is not Reform, but effectually to impart to them those holy principles which enable them to improve such privileges to their temporal and spiritual benefit. This is sound Reform. All other is but to remove those due restraints which impose bounds on the pruriency of our natural corruption, and to throw open the flood-gates to the overwhelming impetuosity of natural licentiousness.

improved by a prevailing regard in the Sponsor to educate his charge in what may tend to his "soul's health," has produced : the scene is too lovely not to be dwelt upon with complacency, and I am unwilling that the Sponsor should lose any stimulant which may encourage him to the earnest discharge of his duties.

The next clause addressed by the Church to the Sponsors is, "and that this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life." Not merely a moral life, but "a godly and a Christian life." In this and in this alone can he "be virtuously brought up." Mere moral virtue is loose in its principle, vacillating as human habit, and arbitrary as human caprice in its exercise, and short and defective in its end. Christian virtue, is grace wrought into the habit, the fruit of the Spirit springing out of a lively faith in the merits and death of our crucified Mediator, and is the very soul of "a godly and a Christian life." No Christian virtue, that is, no gracious habit can flow from the Law, or from a mere legal education, in which I conceive the mistake that dwarfs our present Christian growth to originate, and consequently it cannot issue in "a godly and a Christian life." But once associate this education, or "bringing up," with the promise of the Gospel, once let the Child see that he is a child of adoption, that God is again his reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, and you have "a godly life" emanating from godly principles,

and maintained by “godly” support: and once let him feel that he is indebted to the blood and merits of his crucified Saviour for every mercy he enjoys, and that it is his privilege as well as his duty that men should glorify Christ in him; and that an unfailing supply of his Spirit shall be granted to maintain this divine life in his soul, to his “diligent” and persevering prayer; and you have “a Christian life” also—a life of which Christ is the beginning, the middle, and the end; of which the example of Christ is the unfailing rule, faith in Christ the ever-flowing spring, and the Spirit of Christ the ever-animating support. This is the Christian man of virtue; the man alone who can live “a godly and a Christian life:” never yet did a human soul, formed upon the mere precepts of the Law, attain this state of perfection; it is to the vitally-operating promise of the Gospel alone to which the praise of such a character is due.

The address concludes, by recommending the Sponsors, for the better performance of their duty, to “remember always, that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is” to imitate the life and graces of our Redeemer,—“to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptised die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness.” These two expressions comprise the whole of our sanctification,—the mortification of sin; and, as our old divines term it, vivification to holiness:

and this will be the work of the baptised believer “unto his life’s end;” even till the graces of time are consummated in the glories of eternity: for as Christian men, our whole lives must be spent in “continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and in daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.” Here the Christian course is described, as a continual contest with sin, and a daily progress in holiness, even to the last gasp of life. This is real and vital and bible-proof Christianity: the Child thus qualified is a child of grace, holy and humble; while every other child is merely moral, and therefore worldly and unhumbled, for he can attain nothing more than a proud and meagre morality.

And here, My Dear Friend, permit me to ask, on what other consideration could a Christian man become responsible for the Christian education of his charge? He is too well acquainted with his own infirmity, and that of the Child committed to his care, to advance one step in this spiritual work without the encouragement of the promise, and the aid of the Holy Spirit. Unless in a judgment of faith and charity this Child is a “member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” unless he is “a lively member” of the Church, unless he is really regenerated by the Holy Spirit, received as God’s “own child by adoption,” and incorporated into the “holy Church;” unless in answer to the faithful prayers of himself, the Parents, and the Church, “the



Holy Ghost" is "sanctifying" him as one of "the elect people of God," and being one so truly blessed, he shall "ever remain in the number of" his "faithful and elect children,"—with what hope of success could a Christian man accept the office of a Sponsor? For a man who sees nothing more in Baptism than the mere ceremony, it is consistent enough to undertake the promise without any subsequent endeavour to execute it; as he never understood the vows, so neither had he any intention to discharge the obligations of them; but for a Christian man to engage in this office knowingly and intelligently, for such an one to undertake to train up a soul for glory, to endue it with spiritual qualities, and to make it "conformable to the image of the Son of God," without believing that it was the good pleasure of God to fulfil his promise in sanctifying that soul as one of his own elect—would surely be the height of rashness and presumption.

How different the process of the Sponsor's engagements when faith in the promise is ever animating him to discharge them? Grounded on faith, he proceeds in hope. "Our Lord Jesus Christ has promised in his Gospel, to grant all those things that" he has "prayed for; which promise," the Church assures him, "he for his his part will most surely keep and perform." "Wherefore," he is "persuaded of the good-will of" his "Heavenly Father towards" the Infant of his care, "declared by his Son Jesus Christ;"

he nothing doubts "that he favourably allows this CHARITABLE WORK of his, in bringing this Infant to his holy Baptism." He doubts not but earnestly believes that Christ has likewise favourably received this present infant as he did those of old; and he is thus encouraged hopefully and perseveringly to use all the prescribed means that a child so distinguished, should "receive the fulness of" the "grace" of God, "and ever remain in the number of his faithful and elect children."

And now, My Dear Friend, to this reasoning add the moral certainty, that it is only the Sponsor who acts upon this statement, that will ever be found to perform his engagements; and for this plain reason, because he only can form a proper estimate of the privileges of Baptism. A negligent Sponsor is an unbelieving Sponsor; for no man will be anxious to secure advantages, which he does not believe that a promise is given to convey. It is the man that believes the promise, who can alone expect any advantages from it, and it is his vigilance and his care alone that will be concerned to secure them.

Thus encouraged, let not the faithful Sponsor flinch from his charitable undertaking. Let him rally his weak faith by recurring to the promises in favour of the children of the Church. Let him say "should such a man as I flee?" (Neh. vi. 11.) In the hour of difficulty is it for me to turn my back? "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?" (Josh.

vii. 8.) Let him rather gird up his loins to the work, stand in the gap, and make up the breach, remembering that "it is not the will of" his Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Matt. xviii. 14.)

It has been intimated to me by an authority to which every attention is due, that I have given an excessive importance to the office of Sponsor. But I am not aware that I have exceeded that importance which is assigned to it by our Church. According to her requisitions, the Sponsor's character must be unexceptionably holy, it being required, that 'the said person so undertaking hath received the holy Communion.' (Canon 29.) The largest portion of the service for Infant Baptism also, is that in which the Sponsor is either addressed or engaged. And it is not to the Parent primarily, but to the Sponsor, to whom the Church looks as the "*God-father*" of the child. Assuming the Parent to be a Christian, and that the child is therefore within the covenant of promise, she leaves the selection of the *God-father* to the discretion of the Parent, under the approbation of the Minister, according to the twenty-ninth Canon; but she expressly excludes the Parent from undertaking the office of Sponsor by the same Canon; and as expressly commits the whole responsibility of the Christian education of the child to the Sponsor. And how truly blessed would the state of our Parishes be as Congregations of Christians, were the individual members of the Church united

together by the Baptismal bond of becoming Sponsors for each other's children, thus sweetly expressed by the late Rev. L. Richmond to his dying friend, the late Rev. H. J. Maddock. 'We have, I think, loved each other as brothers, and when little, perhaps, was written or spoken, we have had mutual thoughts of peace, and regard for our *god-children*, our wives, and our little ones.' What a Christian sympathy and holy interest would bind them together in the blessed company of Saints! How truly would the holy communion be realized, and how would the size of our Parishes be really decided by this Baptismal communion! for when the population exceeded the influence of this sympathy, by excess of numbers, the Parish would cease: and this principle of Baptismal sympathy would not only limit the Parish, but like the new swarm from the parent stock, throw off the superfluous population to another Church, and another Minister, and thus another Parish would arise like another hive. But as our swarming populations have increased without due parochial provision; all Baptismal sympathy must gradually have declined, till it was necessarily lost. Hence an excess of population, and ignorance of Baptismal obligations and privileges must necessarily accompany each other: and this has unhappily taken place to an extent that has almost obliterated all due sense of Infant Baptism, as it is held by our Church, and by all the Churches of the Reformation. Only let the *prin-*

*ciple* of our Baptismal Service as represented in this work, be carried out and maintained practically and experimentally in a family or a Parish, and the blessings of it will be so evident as decidedly to recommend it to general adoption. In the offer of this principle, the Son of man has been long come, but he has not “found faith on the earth,” (Luke xviii. 8.) to carry it out into effect: let us only “believe,” and “all things are possible to him that believeth.” (Mark ix. 23.) The most Christian Congregation with which I have ever been connected as Minister, owed much of its loveliness and active charity, I am well convinced, to the carrying out of this principle into practice: the child having been introduced before the full congregation in the middle of the service, the Parents mutually becoming Sponsors for each other’s children: and the congregation by their fixt attention, exhibited by their periodical standing and kneeling, evidently testifying their interest for the Baptised Infant as a praying, praising, and sympathising Church. And shall I be pardoned for intimating, that, if instead of permitting our attention to be engrossed by Prophetic speculations, we would both as Ministers and People, but exercise a lively faith in the promise, and actively with prayer, and kindness, and perseverance, apply this principle in our Parishes, we should be using more effectual means to advance Millennial days, than are at present in use. Let but the decidedly holy persons of a Parish,

instead of shrinking from the responsibility of Sponsorship stand boldly forward at the font before the assembled Congregation, in concert with the Minister, “undertaking” the office of Sponsor to those Infants whose Parents sensible of the privilege, would yield their children to the kind vigilance of such sponsorial interest, and a holy discipline would be commenced, which would abash the profligate, the worldly, and the mere Professor into retirement from so responsible an office: and it has been found, that, in such circumstances, the practical effect has been, that but few merely nominal Christians could be prevailed on to assume the character of Sponsor, thus undertaken before the whole Church; and that the difficulty of procuring Sponsors by worldly or profligate characters has been such, as to induce them to consider their ways at least, if it has not operated as means of turning them from the evil of them. A holy Minister and a holy Congregation, have still a powerful discipline at their discretion, if they have but faith, and love, and zeal, to persevere in carrying it into effect. It is not the *principle* of either of our Sacraments, as ordered by the Established Church, that requires the smallest alteration, neither need one word be changed. It is a defective discipline which disables them from producing their due effect; and this defect of discipline, nothing but the improving faith, and love, and zeal, of the really faithful Minister, and a faithful people can supply. And



if this *principle* had been but acted upon by those who now separate from our Church, on account of her abuses and want of discipline; and if instead of abstracting their persons and prayers from her support, and thus increasing the very mischief of which they complain, they had still continued to uphold her by their piety and prayers, healing where they have but irritated the wound, and restoring where they have but enlarged the rent; the Reformed Church of England might have presented to the world a lovely Communion of Saints, which might have challenged the admiration of mankind. But the Devil well knows the efficacy of the Gospel principle of PROMISE, when it is embraced by a lively faith, and carried out with corresponding love; and he has awfully succeeded in confounding and obscuring the Baptismal principle of the Reformation, which he as well knows to be the initiatory exemplification of salvation by promise; and by thus shutting the door, he has closed up the main access to the building.

## LETTER IV.

## THE INFANT.

THE Infant baptised can justly expect the benefits of Baptism in no other way than by faith in the promise. He is taught, that when his name was given him at his Baptism by his Sponsors, he was as a professed Christian admitted into all the privileges of that high character, that he was then “made a member of Christ,” incorporated into his body the Church, by faith expressed for him by his Sponsors, thence “the child of God” by adoption and grace: and thence “an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,”—if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. He is then taught to walk worthy of his calling as a “Child of God,” to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, to believe the Articles of the Christian faith, and to keep and walk in God’s holy will and commandments all the days of his life. And he “heartily” thanks his “Heavenly Father that he has called” him “to this state of salvation through Jesus

Christ" his "Saviour," and it is his prayer to "God, to give" him "his grace that" he "may continue in" this state to which he has been thus graciously called, "unto his life's end." He is then taught "to believe in God the Father who hath made" him "and all the world; in God the Son who hath redeemed" him "and all mankind;" and "in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth" him "and all the elect people of God." Not who *may* sanctify or *shall* sanctify, or whose office it is to sanctify, but is then presently engaged in sanctifying him, together with "all the elect people of God;" of which it is strongly implied that he is one, since all who are sanctified are "God's elect." He is then taught the particulars of the will of God which constitute the rule of his obedience, in the ten commandments, of which an epitome is given in the two great branches of his duty. Then the duty and necessity of prayer are insisted on: and the "Instruction" concludes with an explanation of the Sacraments, which, as means of grace, are, under the blessing of the Spirit, to nourish and confirm his graces.

Here the construction and form, as well as the subject matter of the Catechism, go to instruct the Child, that he is "a member of Christ," &c.: that God has called him into a state of salvation by grace through Jesus Christ his Saviour; and that the Holy Ghost is even then sanctifying him, together with all the elect people of God. And is not all this in perfect consistency with the prayers and

praises of his Baptism which has preceded, and the prayers of the Bishop at Confirmation, which succeeds his Catechetical Instruction? In the former we say, “grant that this child now to be baptized therein, may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children:” and we “yield hearty thanks” to our “most merciful Father, that it hath pleased” him “to regenerate this infant with” his “holy Spirit, to receive him for” his “own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into” his “holy Church.” And in the latter, the child having “renewed the solemn promise and vow made in” his “name at” his “baptism;” the Bishop opens his prayer with an acknowledgment of the regeneration and justification of the child, “Almighty and everliving God who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins,” &c. And is not this in perfect accordance with the Scriptures? On what ground does St. Paul call upon the Romans for sanctification? “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,” &c.: the duties of the five last chapters of the epistle, are built on the mercies of the eleven first; and the important illative “therefore” is the cement which binds the superstructure of duties and graces to the foundation of “mercies.” On what ground does he call upon the Colossians to

exercise graces or to discharge relative duties, but as “risen with Christ,” and as “the elect of God?”

And have we not ample reason to take this encouraging view of the subject, both from the letter of our formularies, so perfectly according with that of Scripture, and the ill success which has hitherto attended our legal mode of enforcing Catechetical Instruction? Let us no longer educate our children in the persuasion that they have an ability to do good “which by nature” they “cannot have.” Let us no longer, when a child is in fault, exact a promise from him, made in the confidence of his own natural strength, that he will not repeat it. Let us be consistent, and no longer teach the child, that he has “no power of” himself “to help” himself, and yet constantly make demands upon the exercise of a strength, as though it were his own, which we know ourselves, and also teach him, that he has not. Let us rather encourage him to faith and good works, by showing him that he is under a covenant of grace; that what his own “ungodly” nature, without any strength to good, cannot do, Jesus Christ has done, and will do, both *for* him and *in* him: that what the Law demands *of* him, Christ has done *for* him, both in his life and death; and that what the Law demands *in* him, Christ has engaged to impart by his Spirit; that his constant prayer must be “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;” (Psalm li. 10.) that his coldness in prayer, his trifling and

his indisposition in this duty are proofs of his fallen nature, and of the necessity of grace; that all his childish faults, his lying, his idleness, his disobedience, his thoughtlessness and the like, are sins against a holy God; that this God is now his kind Father in Jesus Christ; whose love to him demands a willing obedience, a devoted heart, and the dedication of body and soul to his service; that a sense of his sinfulness should bring him low on his knees in constant confession and sorrow for his sins; while God as a reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, is ever ready to receive his confessions, to pardon his sins, and to renew him in holiness; that the grace which has adopted him, will assuredly help him; that in all his trials and difficulties he must go to God, and never cease to call upon him "by diligent prayer." It is confessed by many a Parent with a bitter sense of disappointment that our present mode of education is unsuccessful; let us change our principle for that of the Baptismal Service, and its corresponding formularies; let us trust to the promise, draw our resources from grace and not from nature, educate our children as children of adoption, and hope that God will reward our faith with his blessing.

But it may here be said, would you have us teach our children the doctrine of particular election, as a principle of action stirring them up to a holy life? I answer, that I would have it taught as our Church teaches it, not in a dry, scholastic, and angry manner, as it is too frequently taught



in the pages of disputatious controversialists ; but with all the blessed sense of privilege, and all the encouraging accompaniments with which it is taught in the three formularies of our Church which relate to Baptism.

I conceive then, that the Sponsor is, according to those formularies entitled thus to address his charge. “ My Dear Child ; There can be no doubt, I think, in your mind, that you are a sinner against God ; the Bible teaches you this, and your daily experience teaches you the same. You know that you are indebted to him for all things ; he made you, he preserves you, he has redeemed you ; and what returns do you make to him for all this kindness ? Do you pray to him ? You know what a trouble it is to you to engage in prayer, and how thoughtlessly and coldly you perform this duty. You should fear, respect, and reverence him ; but in your prayers how little reverence do you show for him ; how carelessly and inattentively do you conduct yourself ! You should love him “ with all ” your “ heart, mind, soul, and strength ; ” now if you love him with all your heart, you will prefer him to every person and every thing ; but do you not love your Parents better than God, and do you not love many foolish trifles more than you love him ? And as to loving your neighbour as well as yourself, you know how unwilling you are to give to another, even to your own friends, any part of that which you have set your heart upon. Now all

this is sin, for it is not doing what God's holy law commands you to do; and it all springs from an evil heart of unbelief in the living God; with which evil heart you came into the world, and which your Parents as well as yourself derived from the fall of our common Parent Adam. Thus being a sinner by nature you are a child of wrath, for you are "not able to do these things of" yourself, "nor to walk in the commandments of God," nor "to serve him."

"Think then in what a dreadful state you were born; "by nature" you are a "child of wrath," and being a child of wrath, your just portion is everlasting punishment in hell. But see what mercy God has shown you; for through his mercy in giving his only Son for you, you are no longer a child of wrath, but a child of grace: you are again admitted as the child of God by adoption; for God in his holy word has given us "exceeding great and precious promises," (2 Peter i. 4.) which he has adapted to us in our different relations and conditions as fallen sinners. Children have promises made to them, and Parents have promises made to them. Now God has greatly encouraged Christian Parents to devote their children to him, and to bring them up to love and to fear him. And all these promises are summed up in that gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he reproved those who would have kept little children from him as they brought them to him for a blessing; and when he said, "Suffer the little

children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." When you were an Infant, your Parents chose me as your God-father, your spiritual Parent to present you to the Church for Baptism; in this office of kindness to you I willingly engaged: and because the Church requires of all "persons to be baptised, repentance whereby they forsake sin, and faith whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament;" and as you were then an Infant, and "by reason of your" then "tender age you could not perform them,"—"I promised them both" for you before the Church as your "Surety," which promise when you come of age you yourself "are bound to perform."

"And now you are arrived at sufficient age to understand these things, let me remind you first of the engagements which I have undertaken for you. I promised first, that you "should renounce" the great enemy of God, "the devil, and all his works," for he was a liar and "a murderer from the beginning;" (John viii. 44.) and not only the devil, but "this wicked world," which is indeed a world lying in wickedness with all its pomps, and all its vanity, which encourage you to self-exaltation and self-display: and that you should renounce "all the sinful lusts of the flesh," which you so frequently feel the power of, and which are so constantly stirring you up to perform your own desires in preference to the will of God.

The second promise I made for you was, “that you should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith:” which are the principles of your conduct, and without which it is impossible that you can be either holy or happy. The last promise I made for you was, “that you should keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life.” You see then how large and important the engagements are which I have undertaken for you, so large and important that I could not have thought of undertaking them but on the security of a divine promise: but I saw you destitute and helpless, and being “affectionately desirous of you,” and believing that God would favourably allow the “charitable work” of mine in bringing you to his holy baptism, weighty as the charge was, since it was all for your benefit, I could not but willingly engage to perform it.

“You see then how much is required of you now you are of sufficient age to understand and to discharge your Baptismal obligations: I ask you now to make good my promises to the Church: the Church expects it both of me and of you, and God forbid that we should disappoint her reasonable expectations.

“Be not discouraged at the difficulty of your undertaking: believe only the rich promises of God, and you shall not fail. It is true, you “are not able to do these things of yourself;” you cannot in any strength of your own renounce the

world, the flesh, and the devil ; you have no ability in either your mind or heart to believe one of these Articles of your faith ; nor can you “ walk in the commandments of God, and serve him without his special grace : ” but do not forget, that this grace God is ever ready to give you, and that he loves you “ at all times to call ” on him “ for ” it “ by diligent prayer ; ” and as you are now a child of his adoption, you are at all times acceptable to him, and his ear is ever open to hear you. You have much to encourage you ; for remember what blessed privileges you were admitted to at your Baptism ; you were first “ made a member of Christ : ” now I expect the evidences that you are as truly incorporated into, or become a member of Christ’s spiritual body, as that my arm or my leg are a part of this my natural body ; and these evidences are, that you live in Jesus Christ by the exercise of a lively faith, and that he lives in you by the renewing, sanctifying, and consoling influence of his spirit. The life, therefore, which I am desirous of seeing you live in the body, is a spiritual life, which you can only live by “ faith of the Son of God.” (Gal. ii. 20.) Let it encourage you to bring all your wants to a throne of grace, when you remember that Jesus Christ sits as the Head of his body the Church, of which I trust you are a lively member, to supply all your wants, and to give you grace sufficient for every time of need.

“ Let me also encourage you by reminding you

that as you were at your Baptism “made a member of Christ,” you were, in virtue of this connexion with Jesus Christ, then made “the child of God” also. As God is “his Father” so he is now your Father, not by nature but by adoption and grace. You know, that, as you are a sinner, you can claim nothing of God; all that you have from him therefore is in the way of mercy. If I meet a poor ragged houseless starving child in the street, he cannot claim one farthing from my pocket as his right; much less to be taken into my house: but if I extend my pity still further than this; if I take him home to my house, make him one of my family, clothe him at my own expense, seat him at the same table with myself, and introduce him to my friends as my own child, to whom I purpose to leave my property when I die; this is freely and graciously to adopt him as my own child. It is an act of mere pity, of free grace, nothing moving me to this act of benevolence but my own will and pleasure. It is thus, that, in virtue of your being a member of Christ through faith, you become a child of God by adoption: you are one of his family, you are of the household of God, not a “servant but a Son,” (Gal. iv. 7.) and therefore entitled to see your Father’s face, to enjoy what his house affords, to tell him all your wants, to pour all your complaints into his bosom, to find access into his presence at all times by prayer, and to enjoy a constant sense of his kindness and love; and this sense of a Father’s



kindness and love you will find the grand preservative from sin.

“ And being thus God’s adopted child, let the third privilege of Baptism encourage you to go “on your way rejoicing;” for being a child of God, you are “an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;” if a child then an heir, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. Enjoying the privilege of a child, heaven is given you as your everlasting inheritance. It is the free purchase of the blood of Christ, graciously and gratuitously bestowed upon you. You stand before God in the merits of Christ Jesus; he regards you as a portion of his Son, a member of his very body; and with the love wherewith he loves him he loves you also, for “so are we in the sight of God as is the very Son of God himself.”<sup>1</sup>

“ “Do you not think,” then, since all these things are so evidently for your advantage, “that you are bound to believe and to do as” we “have promised for you?” And should you not say “yes” indeed I do think so; and it is my firm intention, if God help me with his grace, to believe and to do as you have promised for me; and I heartily thank our heavenly Father that he hath thus called me from my natural state of sin and condemnation, to this state of salvation of free mercy and mere grace through the channel of all his mercies Jesus Christ our Saviour: and it shall

<sup>1</sup> Hooker.

be my constant prayer to God to give me his grace, that I may continue in this same state of salvation by grace, to the very end of my life, when the grace which he has bestowed on me on earth shall be perfected in the glory of heaven?

“ You do well to say “ unto my life’s end,” for it is yours to discharge Baptismal vows, and to enjoy Baptismal privileges to the very last gasp of your mortal life ; and of this the Church will not fail to remind you. Whenever you are ill, you will be told of “ the profession which you made unto God in your Baptism ;” and at your Confirmation, the Bishop will make the most pointed appeal to your conscience, whether you are willing to confirm in your own person the vows and promises of your Baptism.

“ Let me conclude then, by affectionately reminding you that a season is approaching when you are to “ be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him ;” this “ care ” is committed to me ; and our Minister will expect me to see that you are prepared for that solemn occasion. The Bishop will then ask you the questions I have just now put to you ; demanding of you whether you do there in the presence of God, and the whole “ congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism ;” and on your answering “ I do,” as I trust you will through grace be enabled to do with all your heart, he will assume that “ God ” has “ vouchsafed to regenerate you by water and the

Holy Ghost," and has "given" to you "forgiveness of all" your "sins;" and his prayer will be that God would "strengthen" you "with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, daily increase" in you "his manifold gifts of grace," and that you "may continue" his "for ever." You see then what the Church and its Ministers expect from us, that I should present you a truly gracious soul at your Confirmation. It is my heart's desire not to disappoint them. I would watch over your growing years with the most affectionate solicitude, trusting to those kind promises for success, on which alone I undertook the interesting office of your Godfather; and by which I trust you are indeed a "child of God," and that the Holy Ghost is even now "sanctifying" you with "all the elect people of God." And it is my hearty prayer, that you may constantly avail yourself of all the means of grace which secure this happy state, so that you "may receive the fulness of grace, and ever remain in the number of" the "faithful and elect children of God."

Did every Godfather thus address his charge, habitually and perseveringly, from the first apprehension of his opening faculties, to the day of his Confirmation, would not the Christian world present an improved appearance? and might we not hope, that God would smile on such endeavours to honour the most blessed truths of his word, his mercy and his love, as they were legitimately and practically brought

into action to form a soul in holiness, on the indisputable warrant of his promise ?

But I am well aware, My Dear Friend, that such is the opposition of all our hearts by nature to this great leading doctrine of the grace of God, that it will be necessary to heap proof upon proof before we can be persuaded to admit the doctrine of election as a motive of Christian action, especially to the young. I have already shown, I trust, that this is the principle of holiness approved by the Baptismal Service, the Catechism, and the Service of Confirmation ; I must again appeal to our Church in the second Catechism, or longer and more expanded detail of doctrine and practice which she has provided for her more adult catechumen. This is King Edward the Sixth's Catechism, an elaborate and authorised work of our Reformers, and far too little known among us.<sup>1</sup>

This Catechism enjoins " all School-masters

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, the author has endeavored to carry out the principles of this work into practice, by a succession of twelve tracts addressed severally to the Parties engaged in Baptism, under the title of " Helps for the Young, or Baptismal Education according to the Services of the Established Church," including " Helps for the Nursery." The same is now collected into two volumes, and may be had, either in volumes, or in single tracts. It was my intention to have closed these tracts by King Edward's Catechism ; but as Nowell's Catechism which succeeded it is an enlargement of King Edward's Catechism, and the last authorised work of the Reformation in Queen Elizabeth's days, I have given it instead,

—that ye truly and diligently teach this Catechism in your schools, immediately after the other brief Catechism which we have already set forth,” and does not shrink from animating the Scholar to holy exertions by the consideration that “as many as do truly fear, honour, and call upon God,” wholly applying their mind to holy and godly living, “belong to the commonwealth” of God’s elect.

“*Master.*—Now remaineth that thou speak of the holy church; whereof I would very fain hear thy opinion.

“*Scholar.*—I will rehearse that in few words shortly, which the Holy Scriptures set out at large and plentifully. Afore that the Lord God had made the heaven and earth, he determined to have for himself a most beautiful kingdom and holy commonwealth. The Apostles and the ancient Fathers, that wrote in Greek, called it *Εκκλησία*, in English a congregation or assembly: into the which he hath admitted an infinite number of men, that should all be subject to one king, as their sovereign and only one head; him we call Christ, which is as much to say, as Anointed.——To the furnishing of this commonwealth belong all they as many as do truly fear, honour, and call upon God, wholly applying their mind to holy and godly living: and all those that, putting all their hope and trust in him, do assuredly look for the bliss of everlasting life. But as many, as are in this faith stedfast, were

fore-chosen, predestinated, and appointed out to everlasting life, before the world was made. Witness hereof, they have within in their hearts the Spirit of Christ, the author, earnest, and infallible pledge of their faith. Which faith only is able to perceive the mysteries of God: only bringeth peace unto the heart: only taketh hold on the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus.

“*Master.*—Doth then the Spirit alone, and faith (sleep we never so soundly, or stand we never so reckless and slothful,) so work all things for us, as without any help of our own to carry us idle up to heaven ?

“*Scholar.*—I use, Master, as you have taught me, to make a difference between the *cause* and the *effects*. The first, principal, and most perfect cause of our justifying and salvation, is the goodness and love of God: whereby he chose us for his, before he made the world. After that, God granteth us to be called by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: when the Spirit of the Lord is poured into us; by whose guiding and governance we be led to settle our trust in God, and hope for the performance of all his promises. With this choice is joined, as companion, the mortifying of the old man; that is, of our affection and lust.

“ From the same Spirit also cometh our sanctification, the love of God, and of our neighbour, justice, and uprightness of life; finally, to say all in sum, whatsoever is in us, or may be done



of us, pure, honest, true, and good: that altogether springeth out of this most pleasant root, from this most plentiful fountain, the goodness, love, choice, and unchangeable purpose of God. He is the *cause*, the rest are the *fruits* and *effects*," &c.<sup>1</sup>

Here the Scholar is plainly taught, as the child is in our Catechism, that holiness is by grace and not by nature: "it springs from this most pleasant fountain, the goodness, love, choice, and unchangeable purpose of God." A holy life is the consequence, "the rest are the fruits and effects." How much more encouraging then is it to a poor creature, the victim of all the corruptions and infirmities of a fallen nature, to lead him to "this most pleasant root, and most plentiful fountain" of grace, than to throw him on the delusive resources of his own perverted will, and the incapacity of his own depraved heart.

And may we not add to this persuasive precept and practice of our Church, the yet more conclusive argument of fact? Are there not many instances on record, and are they wanting in the living experience of the present day, of children into whose hearts the Spirit of God has wrought a lively feeling of the blessedness of these doctrines? whose religion, as Hooker calls it, is a "feelingly-known" religion: and who though they can give no correct analysis of the same, are exhibiting a lively evidence of the truth

<sup>1</sup> Fathers of the English Church, vol. ii. pp. 362—364.

of these doctrines of grace in their daily walk and conversation? The grace of God is really operating in them a change of heart. If a child on retiring to rest at night, sheds a tear over the sins committed during the day, and prays for pardon of that God who "seeth" that tear "in secret;" if, when driven to distress under the frown of his Parent, he says "Let me kneel down and pray to God for pardon and strength to sin no more," acknowledging God as his refuge; if the Bible and the things of the Bible are dear to him; if he denies himself for the good of others; and if amidst his childish folly and trifling there is a prevailing disposition to regard the concerns of his immortal soul,—could we justly withhold from such a child, the character which the Scripture ascribes to the young Abijah, that there was "found in him some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel?" (1 Kings xiv. 13.) Shall we not, in a judgment of charity, hope that the Holy Ghost "sanctifieth," or is sanctifying that child, and that he is therefore one of "the elect children of God?" I do hope that such instances are not only on record, but that some domestic circles contain these cheering evidences of effectual grace in the youthful mind in this our day; and that Parents are yet to be found, who hail these rising graces as germs of future blessings, both to themselves, their children, and the Church of Christ.

And here, suffer me, before I conclude this part of the subject, to draw the very necessary

distinction between experience of the blessedness of a doctrine, and the power to analyse that experience. The one is the work of the heart, the other of the head; the one is the exercise of the affections, the other of the understanding: the child can feel the love of God and the fear of God, when he may not be able to analyse those feelings, or correctly to describe them. The Scriptures address themselves not to an understanding head but to an "understanding heart:" (Prov. viii. 5.): their blessed truths are not given so much to be reasoned on, as to be felt; not so much to be canvassed by the understanding, as to be applied by the heart. A hungry beggar does not reason about the ingredients of the food presented to him: it is wholesome, it is suitable, it is presented by a friend, it is just the supply which his wants demand. And while learned disputants are controverting the truth of a doctrine, and subjecting it to the severest analysis of critical acumen, the child may without controversy be feeling the blessedness of that very doctrine in his holy experience, which they are questioning, and possess that best evidence of its truth "the witness in himself," (1 John v. 10,) which all the mass of external and internal evidence accumulated in unnumbered folios, may be unequal to convey. The one is the ratiocination of man, the other is the impress of the Spirit; the one may be the accurate deduction of intellect, the other is the exquisite essence brought home in power to

the heart, and wrought out in all the lively efficacy of experimental blessedness. Children taught as above, have been known experimentally to apply the doctrine of the Trinity in their prayers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A child may be taught the God with whom he has to do, if the practical purposes for which that God is revealed, are explained to him in the three Unities.

The *first* Unity is that of the three Persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, existing in the Godhead.

The *Father* is the fountain of Deity—abstract and essential perfection—being, wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, power, mercy, love, infinity, &c. The child has seen a holy man, and a powerful man, but he never saw power or holiness; he has seen them as qualities, but he never saw them in essence; now God the Father is all this in essence. And this “no man hath seen, nor can see.” (1 Tim. vi. 18.)

The *Son* is the EXPRESSION of Deity, for “no man hath seen God the Father at any time,” (John i. 18.) neither can he see or comprehend what is essential, “the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him:” (John i. 18.) He hath not only declared him in his revealed word, but he has declared him in his own person, for “he that hath seen” him “hath seen the Father.” (John xiv. 9.) Hence the names of our Lord Jesus Christ denote *expression*: the “SON” is the *expression*, or image of the Father—“the word” is the *expression* of the idea in the mind. (Phil. ii. 6.) He is “in the FORM of God;” Form or appearance denotes *expression*—“The IMAGE of the invisible God,” (Col. i. 15.) is that in *expression* which the Father is in abstract—“the express IMAGE of his person,” (Heb. i. 3.) not *εἰκὼν* as above but *χαρακτήρ* the character of the seal *expressed* on the wax—“the brightness of his glory;” (Heb. i. 3.) the very lustre and brilliancy of his attributes, the perfection of his perfections, and the glory of his glory manifested or *expressed* in its most luminous splendour. “It pleased the

They have addressed God the Father as their reconciled Father in Christ Jesus: God the Son as their Saviour and Redeemer, who took upon

Father that" thus "in him should all fulness dwell;" (Col. i. 19.) and thus "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head *bodily*;" (Col. ii. 9.) or substantially, visibly, intelligibly.

The Holy Ghost is the AGENT of Deity—In *creation*, "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Gen. i. 2.) In *redemption*. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." (Luke i. 35.) At his Baptism Jesus "saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him;" (Matt. iii. 16.) he was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil;" (Matt. iv. 1.) and it was "through the eternal Spirit" that he "offered himself without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14.) In *regeneration*—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.)

And these three Persons are one God.

The *second* Unity springs out of the first, and is that of God and man in the Person of the EXPRESSION of Deity,—Immanuel, God-man,—thus capable of becoming the Mediator, Redeemer, and Intercessor of fallen man, by taking our nature into his Deity, atoning for all our sins by the all-sufficient merits of his blood, and making each sin-polluted soul that believes in him, the partaker of the divine nature again, that it may be an inheritor of glory.

The *third* Unity springs out of the second, and is that of the Head with its body, the Church—the spiritual union of the believing soul with its God, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, "taking" of the things of Christ, and "shewing" (John xvi. 15.) them to that soul with experimental comprehension and loveliness. The imparted graces of which this union, or divine fellowship consists, are Christ's, that "in all things he might have the pre-eminence," (Col. i. 18.) as

him the nature of man for them ; and God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies, supports and comforts them. Here is the doctrine of the Trinity applied in power for the very purpose for which it was given—God intelligible as a God of mercy, in all the characters and offices in which he offers himself as a gracious God to recover a lost sinner, and to prepare his soul for heaven : and all the volumes that have ever been written on the subject are condensed in the essence of these brief words, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER—THE GRACE OF THE SON—and THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. And as a child may perceive the virtue of this gracious representation of the Godhead in his heart, though he cannot explain, he may feel, and say, “truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John i. 3.)

well in our sanctification, as our justification. The agency by which it is originated, maintained and perfected, is that of the Spirit in the regeneration, sanctification and growing consolation of each individual believer, as the Spirit “glorifies” Christ in receiving of his grace, and applying it to the Church. These are the things “revealed, which belong to us *and to our children:*” they are unfathomable by the acutest intellect, and they are intelligible as applied by the Spirit to a humble and simple soul, even like that of “a weaned child ;” as seems to be plainly intimated by the Apostle, when after a full enforcement of the blessedness of this doctrine of the Trinity, he concludes by addressing the Church under the character of children. “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” In this view the Trinity is practically intelligible ; the very purpose I apprehend for which it is graciously revealed ; and “this is the true God, and eternal life,” (1 John v. 20. 21.)



## LETTER V.

## THE CHURCH.

THE last party yet remains to be noticed, and that most deeply interested in the view of Baptismal privileges we have taken above.—THIS IS THE CHURCH.

“ Me have ye bereaved of my children,” (Gen. xlii. 36,) has been her just complaint for centuries past. Faith is the Parent of her children, and faith having failed, her family has been proportionably contracted. It is from faith in the promise that the Church also expects the blessing. “ Receive him, O Lord, as thou hast promised by thy well-beloved Son”—“ that this Infant may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord.” She entertains no doubt herself as to the performance of the promise towards the baptised Infant, provided the proper means be observed. These means she insists on largely in her address to the

Sponsors ; and as she entertains no doubt herself, so it is her unwearied effort, throughout the whole of the Baptismal and its kindred Services, to impress the minds of her people, the Sponsors, and the Child when arrived at years of discretion, with the same undoubting confidence in the promise of a Covenant-God, that he will assuredly “grant” the “things” that they “have prayed for,” and “for his part will most surely keep and perform the promise” he has made.

It is therefore her desire continually to enlarge the communion of her saints ; and for this purpose she would have every child introduced into her communion visibly and openly, so soon as he may conveniently be brought to the church. She therefore directs, “The Curates of every Parish shall often admonish the people that they defer not the Baptism of their children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their Birth, or other Holy-Day falling between, unless upon a great and reasonable cause, to be approved by the Curate.” “And also they shall warn them, that without like great cause and necessity they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses.” The Church further enjoins, “The people are to be admonished, that it is most convenient that Baptism should not be administered but upon Sundays, and other Holy-days, *when the most number of people come together* : as well for that the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the

number of Christ's Church : as also because in the Baptism of Infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism. For which cause also it is expedient that Baptism be ministered in the Vulgar Tongue."

Here surely is a jealous vigilance that all things may be done to excite and maintain the sympathy, and charity, and vital influence of a holy communion, all tending to the general edification of the Church.

First, Baptism is not to be deferred but from necessity, after " the first or second Sunday next after " the " birth." If the Jewish Infant was introduced into the Church on the eighth day after its birth, and received the sign and seal of the covenant; why is the heir of a brighter dispensation to be excluded from the earliest participation of its blessings; and of the interest, and love, and communion of that Church into which he is admitted?—Nothing but necessity therefore is deemed by the Church a sufficient reason for withholding the Infant from its bosom of grace, so soon as it is capable of partaking of the blessings of its communion.

Secondly, so desirous is the Church of promoting the holy fellowship of her members, and of maintaining their gracious sympathies towards each other, especially towards the lambs of the flock, who most need her tender care, that she will have them receive the sign and seal of her

communion, not in the private chamber of their natural parent before the confined domestic circle, but in their spiritual "Mother's house," and in the chamber of her that conceived" (Song of Solomon, viii. 2,) them, even the fullest resort of her children in the "great Congregation;" Parents are therefore to be warned, that without "great cause and necessity they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses." On the contrary, "the People are to be admonished, that, it is most convenient, that Baptism should not be administered but upon Sundays, and other Holy-days, when *the most number of people come together.*" The first reason assigned for this publicity is, "that the Congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's Church." And why "testify," but that they may be interested in each child as he is respectively introduced "into the number of Christ's Church." But what interest can the Church take in a child baptised in secret, whom she never saw, never recognized? What sympathies can the Church entertain for a child baptised "at home," not visibly incorporated into her communion, and of whom she formally and sacramentally knows nothing? She cannot "testify" that which she never saw, and of which she has no knowledge or experience but from the Register book of the Parish. Here is not only no personal knowledge of the Child, but no feeling is excited in favour of

the baptised Infant, by her prayers being solicited and obtained. Prayer is perhaps the sweetest expression of the "Communion of the saints:" while they pray together they are brought into the experience of the most vital blessing of their communion: they are all together before the throne of one Covenant-God and Father; they are pleading the merits, and availing themselves of the intercession of one common Saviour; and they are exercising the graces and enjoying the acknowledged presence of one common Sanctifier and Comforter. Prayer is the loveliest and the liveliest sympathy of Christian communion: and therefore the best mode of "testifying" the introduction of the Infant "into the number of Christ's Church." But how can the Church feel the lively interest of prayer for a child of which she knows nothing?

The second reason assigned for the introduction of the Child to Baptism, "when the most number of people come together," is, "because in the Baptism of Infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism." As Baptismal obligations end not but with life itself, it is wise in the Church to suggest to her members a perpetual memorial of them. It is her "endeavour that" we "may have these things always in remembrance:" (2 Pet. i. 15.) for this purpose the instances of Baptism are continually presenting to us the profession we also have made, that we may

observe and adorn it by our life and conversation. But who can be reminded of his profession when there is no instance to remind him? And is it not on this account chiefly that any thing like a reference to Baptismal obligations has become almost obsolete? Who examines his conduct by the rule of his Baptismal vows? Who animates himself to holy exertion, by recurring to his Baptismal privileges? The majority of the Christian world seems agreed to retain the name of Baptism, and the rite of Baptism, but to have equally agreed to permit its virtue and efficacy to sink into desuetude and neglect, whether under the winning Popery of the delusion, that the external washing of water is the internal cleansing of the Spirit, or the scarcely less pernicious mischief, a total disregard of the promise and of the privileges connected with it.

The remaining provision for publicity made by the Church is,—“for which cause also it is expedient that Baptism be administered in the Vulgar Tongue.” Christianity is a common boon, and admission to the communion of the Church equally free to high and low, rich and poor, educated and uneducated: the one and the other meet here without distinction as sinners: all needing mercy, since “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” The common language of the country, therefore, is the most expedient channel for conveying common blessings, for what all are privileged to enjoy, all are concerned to understand.



And here let me vindicate our Reformers, from an objection which I have heard urged against them, as to the presumed interest which the Church is said to take in the Baptism of the Infant. It has been said, that when they use this expression, “for the young babes, their parent’s or the *Church’s* profession sufficeth,”<sup>1</sup> that they affix no positive meaning to the word “Church;” that they use loose and indefinite language; and, in plain terms, that they did not understand what they were talking about. I admit, that alienated, as the Child is, from the Church by the prevailing mode of Baptism, neither Infant, nor Parents, nor Sponsors being presented to the Church in her full Congregation, that the term has no intelligible meaning; but then surely the Reformers are free from blame, whose whole endeavour in our formularies is to render the presentation of the Infant as public as possible, to engage the interest, and to awaken the holy sympathies of the Congregation in favour of the baptised Infant; that, in deed, no one spiritual member of that holy communion should behold the child, but with an interest and a sympathy which may issue in subsequent attention to its spiritual welfare; so that, in fact, every member of the Congregation becomes the Sponsor of the Child. Is it just then to cast a reproach upon the Reformers which is due to our own negligence alone? And does not our

<sup>1</sup> King Edward the Sixth’s Catechism, Fathers of English Church, vol. ii. p. 369.

own want of discernment both evidence and reprove that unbelief, which has deprived the Sacrament of its meaning, and the Church of that interest in the baptised, which the faith of our Reformers steadily and uniformly ascribed to it? Let us but attach the same important meaning to this Sacrament that the Reformers did, and the Sponsorial responsibility of the Church will be both intelligible and appropriate. Let the Church once feel a maternal interest in the Child introduced to her communion, and a parent's regard and a parent's attentions will follow: it is experience alone which can render the idea truly intelligible. But is it not somewhat ungracious in us, to neglect the means expressly provided by our Fathers, to secure the interest of the Church in favour of the Child, and then to charge upon them the darkness of that ignorance, into which our own errors have betrayed us?

Here then, My Dear Friend, let me ask what sight can be more interesting than that of the Baptismal Service of our Church, conducted on the principles above stated? Why should a large interest be excited in favour of Jewish children, or Mahomedan children, or Heathen children, who are presented for Baptism, and crowds attend to "testify" their interest in this sight, while no similar expression of interest attends the presentation of our children or of those of our neighbours? Assuredly either Baptism is nothing more than an empty sign or an un-

meaning ceremony in our esteem ; or we are regardless of the spiritual welfare both of our own children and of those of our friends. But do they stand in less need of covenant mercies than the children of the Jews ? Do they less need the accrediting sign and seal of such mercies ; or do they less need the prayers and communion of the Church ? But once open the true meaning of our Baptismal Service, and awaken a real interest for the spiritual welfare of our children, and what Service is so calculated to give that interest due expression, and to maintain and confirm it as our Service of Baptism, understood by the respective parties according to the above explanation ?

Place before your view, then, the full Congregation ; the Parents, the Sponsors, and the Church, presenting and receiving the Infant, in virtue of the promise made to the believer and his children.—The Congregation committing the Child of their hopes to approved Sponsors, and accepting their promise, as a pledge that the Child shall “be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life ;” and the Sponsors engaging the prayers of the Church, for every promised blessing to be poured forth and continued on their Infant charge. Infuse but spiritual life into all the parties engaged in this interesting work, active charity, lively faith, realizing hope, and holy expectation, and hear all these blessed graces actively expressing themselves in the prayer and praise of our admirable

Service, and might we not hope that a Christian Communion,—even that fellowship of the saints, which was once so encouraged as forming the cement, and bond, and vital energy, and real glory of the Church,—might be generated in favour of the received and Incorporated Infant, which might issue in unceasing prayers for its welfare, and an equally unceasing interest in its spiritual growth and prosperity?

But let us advance still further, and see how every other formulary of our Church would receive a meaning, a beauty, a consistency, and a perfection, from this right understanding and observance of this initiatory Sacrament. And here it will be found, that the intelligence and spirit infused into the Baptismal Service is the very soul which gives intelligence and spirit to every subsequent formulary; for all the rest are subsequent, and are intended to give to this perfection and effect.

Trace the progress of this newly incorporated member throughout the whole of the Church's communion, as that progress is exhibited in her respective offices. Say then, that the Parents, the Sponsors, the Child, and the Church, are all engaged in discharging the duties, and enjoying the privileges which the Church assumes them to be discharging and enjoying, towards one of God's elect children. Thus "virtuously brought up," and piously educated, "to lead a godly and a Christian life," and growing in grace himself, his

catechetical instructions both at home and in the Church are producing the proper fruits, and there is a sound hope that he is in fact, what the promise at his Baptism gave assurance that he should be, “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” In this hopeful state he is presented for Confirmation; and the Bishop assuming that God has “vouchsafed to regenerate” him “by water and the Holy Ghost,” and to “give” him “forgiveness of all” his “sins,” prays that God would—not begin a new work in him, but further and perfect what he has already begun,—would “strengthen” him “with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in” him his “manifold gifts of grace:” he also makes “humble supplications,” for this “servant” of God “upon whom, after the example of the Holy Apostles” he has “laid” his “hand, to certify” him “by this sign of” God’s “favour and gracious goodness towards” him; not to impart the incipient “favour and gracious goodness” of God “towards” him, for this he assumes the child has enjoyed from the hour of his Baptism; but to certify him of it by the “sign,” the imposition of hands; the sign and seal of an instrument adding nothing thereto, but the final ratification and conclusive confirmation of its contents. To these petitions of her chief Minister, the Church adds her hearty “Amen” of concurrence and consent; testifying by her voice, her heart-felt interest in the confir-

mation of those graces and privileges, in the primary imparting of which she had “ testified ” a similar lively communion at the Baptism of the Child.

He is now admitted into the full participation of the privileges of the Church ; being free of that Sacrament, which she dignifies by the name of **THE COMMUNION** : intimating that it is the highest act of spiritual communion, whether with their Saviour or with each other, into which the faithful can be admitted on earth. With what real joy does the Church receive the Child thus Confirmed, into the choicest and richest privilege of her communion ! How does she seat her children with her at the same table of redeeming mercy, and invite them to partake of the same divine repast ! and how fully and perfectly are the awakened affections, and expectant graces of the newly-confirmed gratified, by his recognition of the same privileges enjoyed in **THE COMMUNION**, with which he had long been acquainted in the former days of his childhood as he had found them in Baptism, and its two kindred Services ! After having “ duly received,” those “ holy mysteries,” he heartily thanks God, “ for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us.” These latter are the very expressions of the Confirmation Service : they are words most dear to



him. "The favour and goodness of God towards him are those blessings of which he desires especially to be assured. Of these he was "certified" at his Confirmation by the "sign" of the imposition of hands; but now he has a far richer assurance, being a spiritual partaker of "the most precious body and blood of" the Son of God, his "Saviour Jesus Christ." He proceeds to thank God with the Congregation present, "that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son." Here he blesses God, for the assurance, that he is indeed what he was made at his Baptism, a "very member incorporate in the mystical body of" the "Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people," or the adopted children of God; and that he is also an "heir through hope of" God's everlasting kingdom:" and his prayer is that he "may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as" God "has prepared for" him "to walk in." He is "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has "prepared" for him to walk in, (Eph. ii. 10.) and he is now admitted into the full participation of all the rights and privileges which belong to the "holy fellowship" of God's elect."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the Second Prayer after the reception of the Com-

Let us now proceed further. With what holy feeling and spiritual intelligence does he now join the Congregational communion of the Church ! The Morning and Evening Services of the Liturgy, are now spiritually understood, and relished, and enjoyed ; he has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and he feels how admirably adapted our Liturgy is, to express the lively feelings of a gracious soul. It is no longer a dead letter and a lifeless form ; but viewed as the rich expression of the “ Communion of the Saints,” it receives a life, and vigour, and spiritual meaning, which, in the absence of this view of the subject, it fails to have. As none but a spiritual soul can understand the Liturgy, so none but a spiritual soul can enjoy it. It is that true and essential Gospel which exactly suits the case of a redeemed sinner. It opens with abundant promises to the penitent, to “ turn away from his wickedness and live : ” on the promises it grounds all its hope of pardoning confession ; on the promises it grounds all its supplications ; and on the promises it concludes its petitions, that God “ would fulfil the desires and petitions of ” his servants. Amidst every variety of devotion, it prays that God would “ make his ” “ chosen people joyful,” that he would deliver them for his “ name’s sake,”—for the sake of his mercy and truth ; that for his “ Honour’s ”

munion ; a prayer deserving of more frequent use, as it abounds in the richest assemblage of the assurances of faith and hope, and in this respect probably exceeds every other prayer throughout the whole of our Liturgy.

sake, he would help his Church now as he had helped their Fathers ; and “ that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in his mercy.” None but a gracious soul can surely comprehend these petitions or enjoy them. They are the “ chosen people ” of God, who alone can rejoice in these things ; and the Church assumes, that all who partake of her Liturgy, as well as all who partake of her other Services, being truly regenerated at their Baptism, are “ chosen people ” of God indeed. And it is only by improving Baptismal privileges and discharging Baptismal obligations, that we can realise her just assumptions, or fulfil her just expectations. Thus the Church proceeds, with a most harmonious consistency, to impart the blessings of her communion to all her subjects, both infant and adult, simply under one character, and that as the “ chosen ” of God.

The Church continues to express her interest in the welfare of her young charge as he attains manhood, and having been hitherto in the inferior relation in the family of his Parents, is now about to be admitted into that superior relation, which while it justifies him in “ leaving his Father and Mother,” invests him certainly with one new relation, that of Husband, and probably with two others, those of Parent and Master also. She cannot permit this child of her prayers, to enter upon so important a change, without again distinctly making him the subject of her communion, and testifying her interest in his welfare, by admit-

ting him to this blessing in the midst of her Congregation. This is not indeed expressly stated in her rubric; it is there ordered, that "the persons to be married shall come into the body of the Church, with their friends and neighbours;" but publicity is to be given to the proposed marriage, by the publication of the Banns in the Parish Church of each party, for "three several Sundays or Holy-days;" and it is stated, that "it is convenient that the new-married persons should receive the Holy Communion at the time of their marriage, or at the first opportunity after their marriage;" and as the communion is a Congregational act, it implies that the marriage should be celebrated before the Congregation. No act of her baptised member, of which she can take especial cognizance, is suffered to pass by her with indifference, "for the members should have the same care for one another." (1 Cor. xii. 25.)

And while the Church admits the offspring of this marriage into her bosom by Baptism, as she received the Parents before; she does not forget to take her share of interest in the recovery of the Mother, by making her "safe deliverance and" preservation "in the great danger of childbirth" an occasion of Congregational praise to God for "his goodness." "The woman, at the usual time after her Delivery," comes "into the Church decently apparelled, and there" kneels "down in some convenient place, as hath been accustomed, or as the Ordinary shall direct," that all may see

her about whom all are interested: and after repeating that graphical description, (Psalm cxvi.) of the state of her soul, during the late trying circumstances through which she has past, she rejoices to express her gratitude with the assembled Church, "I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people: in the courts of the Lord's house, even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem." And that she may enjoy the richest act of thanksgiving to which the Church can admit her, she is invited to the Eucharist, for "if there be a Communion, it is convenient that she receive the Holy Communion." Nothing that can happen to the baptised or his family is foreign from her regard; that baptised person is a saint, and every saint is entitled to the sympathy of the whole blessed communion to which he belongs.

This interest remains undiminished throughout the whole of the earthly pilgrimage of the baptised. Is he "any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate?" if so, he acquaints "the Communion of Saints" with his malady, and requests their prayers for him; and the Church prays "especially" for him "for whom" her "prayers are desired;" for "if one member suffers," so intimate is her communion, that "all the members suffer with it." Has he been visited with mercies? he requests the Church, as partaker of his joy, to unite with him in thanksgiving; and the Congregation offer to God "most humble and hearty thanks for all" his goodness and loving-

kindness to us, and to all men, particularly to "him," who desires now to offer up "his praises and thanksgivings for thy late mercies vouchsafed to him;" here "if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. xii. 26.)

And if he be detained from the public "Communion of the Saints" by sickness, the Church does not forget him, but as she is desirous to preserve and continue this sick member in the "unity of the Church," she sends her Minister into the chamber of sickness to prepare him for his latter end. Of all our formularies, this is the one which I have heard stated to be least worthy of the piety and judgment of the Reformers; and more especially on this account, that it makes no provision for diversity of character; that it is only adapted to the case of the real Christian, and that the unregenerate man seems to have no share in it. But is not this objection the distinctive character of the formulary? and does it not show its perfect consistency with all the other formularies, which uniformly assume the regeneration of their subject, and treat him as one of God's elect? It is to the baptised, regenerate, and elect, that the Church sends her Minister to comfort him under his sickness, and to prepare him for that solemn change, into which he may be about to pass. Immediately that "he comes into the sick man's presence," he asks God to "spare" his people whom he has redeemed with "his most precious blood;" and shortly after, he prays, "save thy servant which



putteth his trust in thee:" and in this spirit, assuming the regeneration of the "sick member," the prayers proceed. "Look upon him with the eyes of thy mercy, give him comfort and sure confidence in thee—keep him in perpetual peace and safety—extend thy accustomed kindness to this thy servant—sanctify this thy fatherly correction to him, that the sense of his weakness may"—not give him faith as a new thing, or repentance as a new thing; but may strengthen and confirm them—"may add strength to his faith, and seriousness to his repentance." In these expressions the Church gives no hint of her "member" not being regenerated, on the contrary she assumes the fact, and her Minister prays for the growth and establishment of grace in him who already possesses it. So in the "Exhortation" to the sick man, the Church does not hint that his "sickness is sent" to regenerate, but to sanctify him, and that it may "turn to" his "profit," and *help "him" forward* in the right way that "leadeth unto everlasting life." The "sick member" is exhorted "in the name of God to remember the profession which" he "made unto God in" his "Baptism:" it was at that time that he was regenerated, and whether his present sickness be "to try" his "patience," to illustrate his "faith," or "to correct" whatsoever is offensive to "the eyes of" his "heavenly Father," his whole course from the font to the grave is but an exhibition of his Baptismal profession, which is shortly to be consummated in glory.

Let us say then that the closing scene has arrived: and that this "member of Christ," and this "child of God," not being suffered "for any pains of death to fall from him," has entered into his rest, is now in possession of his inheritance, and as Bishop Hall calls him, is now a "Glorious Comprehensor" in the kingdom of heaven. The Church cannot forego her communion, so long as any vestige remains of him who has so long enjoyed it. He has come to his end like a shock of corn in his season, rich in grace, and ripe for glory: and the Church, while she commits his body to the ground, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life," rejoices over the happy transfer of the glorified spirit, now "delivered from the burden of the flesh," and admitted into the mansions of "joy and felicity." With what genuine and sacred joy, do the smiles of grace irradiate the tears of human infirmity, when the Church can calmly terminate her earthly communion with her departed member in these heartfelt thanksgivings, "We give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our Brother out of the miseries of this sinful world; beseeching thee that it may please thee of thy gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom, that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord!" This

Brother was recognised as one of “ God’s elect,” at his introduction into the Church by Baptism ; as an elect of God, he has been uniformly recognised throughout all his pilgrimage in all the formularies of the Church, which express his various communion with her ; and now when his earthly course is run, and his mortal remains are brought to receive the last affecting token of her regard, she consigns them to the ground as those of an elect of God, “ beseeching” him “ of his gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten” his kingdom ;” when this troubled scene of sin and sorrow shall for ever cease, and when all those who witness his interment, together with all that are “ departed in the true faith of” God’s “ holy name,” may be perfected both in body and soul, “ in his eternal and everlasting glory.”

And here, My Dear Friend, can it be necessary to draw your attention to the intelligible symmetry, the harmonious consistency, and the exquisite beauty of our Church, when viewed in the cheering light of this interpretation ? What a rich and ample provision is here made for “ the Communion of the Saints !” What an extension of charity to the bodies and souls of men from infancy to age ! What efficient means of renovation amidst the miseries and ruins of the fall ! What an approximation of earth to heaven, of grace to glory, of man regenerated and renewed to the spiritual image of his God ! In vain does my imagination

strive to pourtray a scene of things upon earth so perfectly lovely : once let faith, and love, and prayer, but set the wheels of this spiritual machinery in motion, once let the gracious principle of Baptism,—regeneration according to the promise,—be infused into that and all its sister formula-ries, and you would witness a condition of human society infinitely beyond that which fable ever fancied, which the prophetic pages of truth have alone anticipated,—a scene of amity, and peace, and love, and joy, and blessedness,

“ Such as earth  
Saw never, such as heav’n stoops down to see.”

## LETTER VI.

## OBJECTIONS STATED AND ANSWERED.

THERE are two principal objections which I anticipate to the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service and the corresponding formularies of our Church. The one arising from the *fact*—that Baptism does not produce these desirable results which the above interpretation would lead us to expect: the other, questioning the principle of regeneration according to the promise, and hesitating to admit that we are warranted in expecting so much from it. It is but justice to our subject, to answer these objections, before we proceed to state the advantages with which the above interpretation would, with the blessing of God, be accompanied, if carried out into its practical detail, to our Church and consequently to our country.

First then the *fact*—the real condition of things under our present administration of Baptism, may be insisted on, and it may be said, “are not Parents and Sponsors and the Church often disappointed ?

Does the Child thus incorporated into the visible Church always grow up a holy child ? In a word is the promise generally performed ? ”

We may answer first, that to order events is the prerogative of God. His precept is the rule of our duty, and his promise is our encouragement to discharge it ; and if, after the persevering discharge of duty, with prayer for a blessing on the same, we perceive no fruit to the conclusion of the life of the baptised, we may still trust that our faith shall not be without a blessing, and say, “ though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.” (Isa. xlix. 5.) Our grand consideration should be, Have we the warrant for the practice ? Is the precept to baptise clear ? Have we then the promise of a blessing to encourage us ? Are promises of spiritual blessings given to the Children of believers, and did our Saviour invite the Infants to him and bless them when they were brought ? Then let us act the precept, and plead the promise, and leave the event to God. Duty, faith, and prayer, are ours ; the event,—the blessing is solely the prerogative of God.

Or we may answer, with the concluding clause of the Seventeenth Article. “ We must receive God’s promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture : and in our doings that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.” “ Secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; ”



with his hidden will, his secret intentions, no soul of man must presume to interfere ; for they are the attributes and prerogatives of Absolute Deity, and eminently and exclusively “belong” to him. The “things that are revealed belong to us and to our children :” (Deut. xxix. 29.) they are rich expressions of his infinite mercy to us sinners, free intimations of his sovereign love, and as our faith acts upon them with fullest confidence of a blessing, even so shall that blessing be bestowed.

Or we may answer in the following full and satisfactory statement of Beza. “There is a special regard to be had to the Infants of the faithful. For although they have not faith in effect, such as those have that be of age, yet so it is that they have the seed and the spring in virtue of the promise, which was received and apprehended by the Elders. For God promised not us only to be our God, if we believe in him, but also that he will be the God of our offspring and seed, yea unto a thousand degrees, that is, to the last end. Therefore said St. Paul, that the children of the faithful be sanctified from their Mother’s womb. By what right or title then do they refuse to give them the *mark* and *ratification* of that thing which they have and possess already? And if they allege yet further, that although they come of faithful Elders or Parents, it followeth not that they be of the number of the elect, and by consequent, that they be sanctified, (for God hath not chosen all the children of Abraham and Isaac,)

the answer is easy to be made; that it is true all those be not of the kingdom of God which be born of faithful Parents, but of good right *we leave this secret to God for to judge*, which only knoweth it, yet notwithstanding we presume justly to be the children of God, all those which be issued and descended from faithful Parents ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE, forasmuch as it appeareth not to us the contrary. According to the same, we baptise the young children of the faithful, as they have used and done from the Apostle's time in the Church of God, and we doubt not but God by this mark, (joined with the prayers of the Church, which is their assistant) doth seal the adoption and election in those which he hath predestinate eternally, whether they die before they come to age of discretion, or whether they live to bring forth the fruits of their faith in due time, and according to the means which God hath ordained." <sup>1</sup>

It is some years since I met with the above extract from Beza; but the increasing acquaintance which those years have afforded me with the writers of the Reformation, has convinced me that it contains the very pith of the question of Infant-baptism, as held by the Reformers generally, whether of our own or of foreign Churches. They conceived that the children of the faithful

<sup>1</sup> See "a Booke of notes and common places," &c. by John Marbeck, 1581, Article "Baptism."

were heirs according to the promise, they acted in faith of that promise, and they expected the blessing from God, whose prerogative it is to bestow it.

But may we not further answer on God's part, Who shall presume to say in what degree Baptism is really effectual to the imparting of grace, since the virtue of Baptism is not complete till grace be consummated in glory? "Baptism is not done only at the font," says Archbishop Usher, "which is a thing that deceives many: for it runs through our whole life; nor hath it consummation till our dying day, till we receive final grace: the force and efficacy of Baptism is for the washing away of sin to-morrow as well as the day past: the death of sin is not till the death of the body, and therefore it is said, "we must be buried with him by Baptism into his death." Now after death we receive final grace; till when, this washing and the virtue thereof hath not its consummation."<sup>1</sup> Who then shall presume to say at what season it may please God to make Baptism effectual by the vital calling of the Spirit? The whole season from the Baptismal introduction of the Child into the visible Church, to his passing out of it into an eternal state, is the day of grace, in which is that "due season" when it may please God to call him by his Spirit. The day of grace has its twelve hours: some are effectually called in the first or

<sup>1</sup> See *Eighteen Sermons preached in Oxford, 1640*, p. 55.

second, or in early life; some in the sixth or seventh, or in manhood; and others in the eleventh or twelfth, or in declining age. And let it not be forgotten, that not only is the day graduated, but the hour is graduated also. The twelfth hour has its degrees; and how many are effectually called by the Spirit within that latter period, which is frequently spent within the curtains of sickness, or the chamber of wasting infirmity, who shall say? Who shall “*limit* the Holy One of Israel,” (Psalm lxxviii. 41.) or presume to impose bounds on that grace which is boundless? Who can seize a wave of the sea in his hand, as it washes our shores, and fix it in stationary thralldom? Will it not quickly join its kindred element, mingle itself with the ocean, expatiate in the world of waters, and float to either pole? Free grace cannot be restrained. To our apprehension, had we witnessed the scene, the thief on the cross would have been within an hour of hell; it only remained for his legs to be broken, that the body might be taken away: but in the eternal counsels of free mercy, that very hour was appointed as the “*due season*” for the Spirit to work in him that repentance, which was not to be repented of, and that faith which was to issue in immortal salvation. The virtue of Baptismal Regeneration is only known to him, who knows the secrets of the heart, and who orders all things after the good pleasure of his own will. Doubtless he will honour his own appointments, and

invest his Sacraments with due power and success: it is not for man to limit their efficacy, or to confine the freedom of grace within the narrow restraint of finite apprehensions: and as it is the freedom of divine grace which encourages the believer to dive into the dungeon of the most hardened criminal, or to attend the dying bed of the most profligate debauchee; so the Church asserts the same freedom of grace when over the body of every baptised member that she commits to the earth, she expresses “sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The grace that is in Christ Jesus being so free and so full, that it becomes man to give it the largest credit,—even to encourage the hope that with the very last gasp, the “free Spirit” may impart spiritual life to the soul, and by one single effort pour in upon the astonished man, a combined flood of grace and glory. The same moment, in the sinner’s experience, *may* be that both of incipient and of final grace, as the same moment is that of final grace and of incipient glory.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *possibilities* of divine mercy afford no just argument either to commit sin, or to continue in the impenitent indulgence of it. The contrary doctrine may suggest arguments on paper; but where is the practical evidence of their truth? Has one thief been known to go on the high-way, because the thief was forgiven on the cross? Or one unhappy female justified her continuance in profligate habits, because “a woman in the city which was a sinner” had her sins forgiven

But with respect to the failure of Baptismal blessings, we may, lastly, well vindicate the ways of God to man, by proposing “the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering,” (Rom. ii. 4.) to our admiration and our love. How grossly has this blessed Sacrament been insulted by our ignorance, our negligence, our indifference, and our contempt? Treated as baptism has been among us, could any reasonable man hope for a general blessing to attend the ordinance? Without faith in the parties concerned, without intelligence, without any well-understood hope of a blessing, without any distinct expectation of spiritual advantage, without subsequent pleading of the promise in prayer, or subsequent effort to secure the blessing, without one thought of a *godly* education; or one endeavour to evidence Baptismal privileges in the nascent graces of the Baptised; with no habitual instruction to avoid the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil, or rather with no attempt to impart it; and, in one word, to disregard throughout the education of our children, both Baptismal privileges and Baptismal obligations, as though the ceremony of Baptism were all, and that nothing more were intended—if this, My Dear Friend, be the general complexion of Baptismal observance among us, and if it be so her? Such are too often known to “despise the riches of his goodness,” but I have never yet known one that justified continuance in sin by the *possibilities* of the divine sovereignty.



at this moment, surely we may find ample cause of failure in our remissness, and ample cause of thanksgiving that the God of all grace has so patiently borne with our contempt, and that while we have been despising the ordinance of his grace, he has been mercifully exercising the graces of his forbearance and long-suffering towards us.

But I had rather express this state of things in the language of others than of my own.

“ We are baptised in our infancy, that is, as I conceive, dedicated and devoted to God’s service, by our Parents and the Church, as young Samuel was by his mother Hannah ; and there we take a solemn vow, to forsake the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all the covetous desires of it ; to forsake also all the carnal desires of the flesh, and not to follow nor be led by them. This vow we take when we be children, and understand it not : and, how many there are, who know, and consider, and regard what they have vowed, when they are become men, almost as little as they did being children ! Consider the lives and public actions of most men of all conditions, in court, city, and country, and then deny it, if you can, that those three things which we have renounced in our Baptism—the profits, honours, and pleasures of the world, are not the very gods which divide the world amongst them, are not served more devoutly, confided in more heartily, loved more affectionately, than the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose name we are bap-

tised? Deny, if you can, the daily and constant employment of all, to be either a violent prosecution of the vain pomp and glory of the world, or of the power, riches, and contemptible profits of it, or of the momentary or unsatisfying pleasures of the flesh, or else of the more diabolical humours of pride, malice, revenge, and such like. And yet with this empty form we please and satisfy ourselves, as well as if we were lively born again by the Spirit of God, not knowing or not regarding what St. Peter hath taught us, that the Baptism which must save us, is, “Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience to God.” (1 Pet. iii. 21.)

“When we are come to years capable of instruction, many, which is lamentable to consider, are so little regarded by themselves or others, that they continue little better than Pagans in a commonwealth of Christians, and know little more of God or of Christ, than if they had been bred in the Indies. A lamentable case, and which will one day lie heavy upon their account, which might have amended it and did not. But many, I confess, are taught to act over this play of religion, and learning to say, “Our Father, which art in heaven,” and, “I believe in God the Father Almighty:” but, where are the men that live so, as if they did believe in earnest, that God is their Almighty Father? Where are they that fear him, and trust him, and depend upon him only for their whole happiness, and love him, and obey

him, as in reason we ought to do to our Almighty Father? Who, if he be our Father, and we be indeed his children, will do for us all the good he can; and if he be Almighty, can do for us all the good he will: and yet, how few are there, who love him with half that affection as children usually do their parents, or believe him with half that simplicity, or serve him with half that diligence?"<sup>1</sup>

Such was the state of Baptismal observance in the time of Chillingworth. Let us next attend to a more modern evidence.

"As it (Christianity) has introduced such a new state of things, and so fully informed us of the nature of man, the ends of his creation, the state of his condition; as it has fixed all our goods and evils, taught us the means of purifying our souls, pleasing God, and becoming eternally happy; one might naturally suppose, that every Christian country abounded with schools for the teaching, not only a few questions and answers of a catechism, but for the forming, training, and practising youths in such an outward course of life, as the highest precepts, the strictest rules, and the sublimest doctrines of Christianity require.

"An education under Pythagoras, or Socrates, had no other end, but to teach youth to think, judge, act, and follow such rules of life, as Pythagoras, and Socrates used. And is it not as rea-

<sup>1</sup> Chillingworth's Works, Sermon i. p. 333.

sonable to suppose, that a Christian education should have no other end, but to teach youth how to think, and judge, and act, and live according to the strictest laws of Christianity?

“At least one would suppose, that in all Christian schools, the teaching youth to begin their lives in the spirit of Christianity, in such severity of behaviour, such abstinence, sobriety, humility, and devotion, as Christianity requires, should not only be more, but an hundred times more regarded, than any, or all things else.

——, “But, alas! our modern education is not of this kind.

“The first temper that we try to awaken in children, is pride; as dangerous a passion as that of lust. We stir them up to vain thoughts of themselves, and do every thing we can, to puff up their minds with a sense of their own abilities.

“Whatever way of life we intend them for, we apply to the fire and vanity of their minds, and exhort them to every thing from corrupt motives: we stir them up to action from principles of strife and ambition, from glory, envy, and a desire of distinction, that they may excel others, and shine in the eyes of the world.

“We repeat and inculcate these motives upon them, till they think it a part of their duty to be proud, envious, and vain-glorious of their own accomplishments.

“And when we have taught them to scorn to be out-done by any, to bear no rival, to thirst

after every instance of applause, to be content with nothing but the highest distinctions; then we begin to take comfort in them, and promise the world some mighty things from youths of such a glorious spirit.

“ If children are intended for holy orders, we set before them some eminent orator, whose fine preaching has made him the admiration of the age, and carried him through all the dignities and preferments of the church.

“ We encourage them to have these honours in their eye, and to expect the reward of their studies from them.

“ If the youth is intended for a trade, we bid him look at all the rich men of the same trade, and consider how many are carried about in their stately coaches, who began in the same low degree as he now does. We awaken his ambition, and endeavour to give his mind a right turn, by often telling him how very rich such and such a tradesman died.

“ If he is to be a lawyer, then we set great counsellors, lords, judges, chancellors, before his eyes. We tell him what great fees and great applause attend fine pleading. We exhort him to take fire at these things, to raise a spirit of emulation in himself, and to be content with nothing less than the highest honours of the long robe.

“ That this is the nature of our best education, is too plain to need any proof; and I believe there are few parents, but would be glad to see these instructions daily given to their children.

“ And after all this we complain of the effects of pride.”<sup>1</sup>

Such was the anti-baptismal education of baptised England in the days of Law. And can it be said that both these descriptions do not suit our own times ?

Here then we account but too clearly for the *fact*, the failure of Baptismal blessings among us, when we trace it to our own remissness and neglect alone. No, God has not been unmindful of his promise ; but we have been unmindful of our obligations : God has not failed to do his part, but we have failed to do ours : “ How often would I have gathered thy children together ! ” Whence then the failure ? “ but ye would not.” (Matt. xxiii. 37.) “ God is ” faithful, “ who also will do it ; ” (1 Thess. v. 24.) but man is faithless, and but too plainly shows that he disregards the promise, by his indifference to the means of securing its blessings. Is it needful to accumulate evidence of this fact, when the general state of Christian society in the professing world exhibits the worldly and unchristian appearance that it does at present ? And is it still necessary to repeat, that while the two great descriptions among us, both the men of God and men of the world, under different sentiments indeed, equally concur in depriving this Sacrament of its due observance, and equally dishonour its vital efficacy in declining to apply it in

<sup>1</sup> “ A Serious Call,” &c. pp. 236, 7.



the education of the baptised, no divine blessing can justly be expected. When God ordains the end, he ordains the means also, and if man will neglect the means is it not the weakest enthusiasm to expect the end? We hear much of enthusiasm: but what a wide-wasting enthusiasm prevails on this subject of Baptism, over a large portion of the baptised Christian world! Never let us forget the words of Hooker, "To our own safety our own sedulity is required." It is not the promise given that can benefit us, but the promise accepted. When the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, "not without blood," (Heb. ix. 7.) it was not the provision of blood only that was required, it must be sprinkled also. It is not a Saviour provided only that can benefit us, but a Saviour applied. It is not a covenant entered into that can avail us, but a covenant observed. "Then," says Usher, that is, at Baptism "thou enterest into God's livery, mark this, for by it I strive only to bring thee back to thyself. Thou enterest into covenant with him, thou bindest thyself to forsake the world, the flesh, and the Devil; *and we should make this use of Baptism, as now to put it in practice.* When we promised there were two things in the indenture; one, that God will give Christ to us; the other that we must forsake all the sinful lusts of the flesh; this is that makes Baptism to be Baptism indeed to us."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See "Eighteen Serm." as above, p. 54.

Let this simple question then be asked, Have we done that part of the covenant which “makes Baptism to be Baptism indeed?” Let the tens of thousands who have never once thought of Baptismal blessings or obligations after the administration of the rite till the season of Confirmation, answer this question, and let the scores who have declined Sponsorial responsibility from timidity and unbelief answer the same, and it will but too plainly appear, from our own confession, that the *fact* itself,—the failure of Baptismal blessings among us—must be justly ascribed to our non-observance of the covenant, to our own neglect, our own unbelief. Indeed were it not for the fashion of a Christian name, the expediency of a register of that name for secular purposes, and the frequent hope of temporal advantage, for any spiritual renewal that is expected from it, would not the administration of Baptism be nearly obsolete?

Surely then it is our part to vindicate the faithfulness of God, by a penitent confession of our own failure of faith and duty, and to acknowledge that “it is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.” (Lament. iii. 22.)

The second objection proposed, is to the principle itself upon which the whole of our superstructure is built, viz. that we are not warranted in concluding that believing Parents have these exceeding rich and precious promises with respect to their Children; consequently that as

Baptism is the seal of these promises our assumption is false, that they are indeed "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

And here I must plainly confess that to answer this objection with effectual suasion, so as to convince the understanding, and to affect the heart, is a task utterly beyond any power of statement I can hope to possess, or the strength of any evidence I may hope to accumulate. If I could overwhelm the mind with conviction, and silence every whisper of contradiction, I should still find the main assertor of this objection so deeply entrenched within the native depravity of the human heart, that not only no power of man but even of Angel, could avail to disturb him. Unbelief is our deadliest foe, it stands opposed in determined resistance to the promise ; and nothing but that "mighty power which" the Father "wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead," (Eph. i. 20.) can subdue this tyrant, and deliver the human heart from his controul. I have found this generally to be the fact. Those persons of decided piety, to whom I have proposed the above interpretation, have staggered in the very outset. They have said, "But has God given these promises to the Children of believers? Are believers so signally privileged?" They have questioned the reality of the promise, not the just claim of the children to the seal of that promise in Baptism. I am not therefore, in addressing the

members of our Established Church, so much concerned to justify the application of the seal, as the reality and validity of the indenture itself. Their objection strikes directly at the root; and with one mighty blow, the tree, with all its fruits, is to be levelled with the earth. And this is no speculative objection; it is one of most pernicious efficacy in practice: for as such have no belief in the promise, neither do they discover any interest to secure the blessings it bestows.

I will offer then one or two plain suggestions which, though to my own apprehension, for luminous exhibition of truth, they might be written with a sun-beam, I place no dependence on whatever, but commit solely to *His* effectual teaching who alone can enable us to receive the truth in the love of it, and whose grace alone can empower us to behold the promise as the promise of a Covenant-God, and to apply the same to our individual advantage. These suggestions will consist chiefly of the materials already provided in the second letter.

First then, how many and how minute are the promises of God to the bodies of believers! It would be offering a tedious illustration of this remark to advert to the large variety of Scriptures which promise blessings to the respective members of the body of the faithful man. His foot shall be blessed when he comes in and when he goes out: his "hand" shall be blessed "in

all " its work : his eye, his ear, his mouth shall be blessed : nay, " the very hairs of " his " head are *all* numbered." (Matt. x. 30.) And is there no blessing upon that which is most dear to him, " the fruit of the body ? " (Deut. xxviii. 4.) Shall every member have its peculiar blessing ? and is there no blessing upon that which, as it represents them all, is the glory of them all ? Is there no blessing on that which, as it springs from that body, is to transmit its very self to posterity, and to protract its earthly name and existence to distant generations ? It is surely enough to have asked these questions : the mercy of his Father which is in heaven, cannot have omitted to have made the most ample provision for that which is most dear to him of all his earthly blessings ; and as this provision might be expected from his mercy, so that expectation is abundantly confirmed by the manifold declarations of his word.

Or is there indeed no promise given to the posterity of believers that is valid at this day ? Are we justified in applying all the other promises of Scripture, so far as they are applicable to our present condition and circumstances, but are those promises which relate to the children of believers restricted to the peculiar persons to whom they were respectively given ? Is the whole book of God the rich mine of the believer's comforts, and the store-house of his most animating consolations ; but when he attempts to apply these promised blessings to his children, is he to be

denied the boon, and told, "these jewels are indeed deposited among the other precious stores of the treasury of grace, but like the royal crown, they are not for common use; they were bestowed exclusively for the use of the original favourite, but the other children of the family have ever been forbidden to enjoy them?" Shall the Spirit, by the mouth of St. Paul, apply the promise originally bestowed upon Joshua, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," (Heb. xiii. 3.) for the perpetual comfort of the Church; but is there nothing of perpetual application in the promises made to the children of the saints? If there be such a restriction either in the letter or the spirit of the Scriptures, let it be shown. But if no such restriction can be shown, perish that unbelief which would "limit the holy one of Israel" in one of the sweetest promises of his grace, and would deprive the believer of one of the richest consolations of divine mercy and love.

Nor must we fail to insist on the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, on which our Church exclusively insists in her Baptismal Service, as the ground and warrant for the introduction of the Child to this initiatory rite. Indeed nothing more is requisite; for all the promises made to the children of believers receive their establishment and confirmation in the practice of him who gave them. We have here the promise acted out in practical blessedness by him, who alone can effectually accomplish it. For in that gospel,



(Mark x. 13.) we have the express “ words of our Saviour Christ; he commanded the children to be brought unto him; he blamed those that would have kept them from him; he exhorted all men to follow their innocency. By his outward gesture and deed he declared his good will towards them; for he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.” This was not a mere reception of kindness, the expression of natural affection in the Saviour, as it was expressed towards the young Ruler, of whom it is said that “ Jesus seeing him loved him;” (Mark x. 21.) it was an expression of spiritual love; for he not only “ took them up in his arms,” but he “ put his hands upon them and blessed them.” Here was all the form of a spiritual blessing, the imposition of hands, as well as the blessing itself. And if children are capable of a blessing, when in the arms, and under the hands of Christ, are they less capable of a blessing, when, brought in faith to partake of his Sacrament of Initiation, he “ receives ” them “ favourably,” in the benign interpretation of our Church, and “ embraces ” them “ with the arms of his mercy ”? And is it a presumptuous intrusion on the riches of his grace towards them to assume “ that he will give unto them the blessing of eternal life, and make them partakers of his everlasting kingdom ”? Jesus put his hands upon the Infants, and blessed them; and are we justified in ascribing any lower meaning to the words, than that the blessing im-

parted spiritual virtue to their souls? It is surely the privilege of faith to give grace the largest credit, and to honour the words and actions of Christ with the most kindly interpretation of mercy. We may not only say then with Beza, “by what right or title do they refuse to give” children “the mark and ratification of that thing which they have and possess already, inasmuch as they have the seed and spring of faith in virtue of the promise which was received” by believing Parents? but we may say since Christ did actually “in the days of his flesh” impart grace to the souls of Infants by his blessing, by what right do we withhold the children of the faithful from similar blessings now? And if Jesus was “much displeased” when his disciples forbade them to come to him of old, is he less displeased with those whose unbelief forbids children to be partakers of similar blessings now? How grace can exist in the soul of an Infant, it is not within the limits of my faculties to comprehend, nor, as my finite powers are not submitted to such an obligation, am I concerned to comprehend it;<sup>1</sup> neither can I conceive how the soul of an Infant departed is capable of glory: and yet we all admit, and rejoice in the admission, that the souls of Infants departed, are thus highly privileged: and where

<sup>1</sup> The Scripture informs us that one of the same nature as ourselves was actually *gracious* even from his birth. It is said of John the Baptist “and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” (Luke i. 15.)

is the consistency of admitting that the soul of an infant is capable of glory hereafter, and of denying that the same is capable of grace here? for what is glory but consummate grace, and what is grace but maturing glory? and the same divine power and love which appoint this incipient state of natural existence, as a preparatory requisite to that of eternal duration, may in this incipient state of spiritual existence equally invest the soul of an infant with grace as a preparatory requisite to its perfection in immortal glory. That we cannot conceive it, is no just argument of its untruth; we cannot conceive the principle of natural life, any more than we can conceive that of spiritual; the difference is not in the fact but in our apprehension of it. The natural life of an infant is obvious to our senses, and therefore we believe it; the spiritual life is submitted to our faith, and where no faith is, there can be no spiritual perception; the faculty of such perception is wanting. But the strength or weakness of our faculties of apprehension makes no difference in the fact: "though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful." (2 Tim. ii. 13.)

While then we are warranted in trusting the promise, from the confidence that God, in pronouncing blessings on the faithful, would not exclude his choicest gifts, their children, from his grace—from the right of the believer to enjoy the promises made to the children of the faithful, as well as every other promise of the word intended

for the perpetual consolation of the Church, and from the real accomplishment of these promises, by the actual extension of grace to Infants by the blessing of our Incarnate Saviour—let our confidence in the reality of these promises be confirmed by the known kindness of the Father of mercies to the helplessness and innocence of childhood. It is unnecessary to dwell on that kind consideration of their infant weakness which was a chief reason assigned for the preservation of Nineveh of old;<sup>1</sup> or on the assemblage of “children and those that sucked the breasts” to observe the fast in the time of Joel. (Joel ii. 16.) If “kings of the earth and all people, princes and judges, and young men, and maidens, and old men praise the Lord,” the chorus is incomplete if “children” are wanting. (Psalm cxlviii. 11, 12.)—We have already shown that under the old dispensation the especial Sacrament of Circumcision was appointed to bestow more than temporal blessings; and almost without controversy, during fifteen centuries of the new dispensation, the corresponding Sacrament of Baptism has been applied to the children of the faithful; and to this hour, the propriety of such application has been questioned by a comparatively small part of the professing Christian world.—The word of God abounds as we have seen with gracious *promises* in favour of the children of believers; nor is it less abundant and particular in

<sup>1</sup> See Letter ii.

its *precepts* to “train up a child in the way that he should go.” (Prov. xxii. 6.) The life of one holy child in Jeroboam’s family, suspended the judgments which were hanging over the royal house and over the nation at large. When the admirable greatness of “the kingdom of heaven” was to be illustrated, Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst,” and made him his text by which he exhibited the exquisite simplicity and characteristic humility of that greatness. Nor can I decline to insist on the important words which occur in that portion of Scripture: “Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. And whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matt. xviii. 5, 6.) How forcible are these words both in warning and encouragement! How impressively do they warn us to beware of offending “these little ones that believe” in Christ, by abridging their privileges or excluding them from a benefit to which they have even *possibly* a claim! And now let all prejudice and affection be absent; may the Spirit of Christ endue our souls with simplicity and godly sincerity—and though we may hesitate to admit the full meaning which I have ascribed above to our Lord’s “blessing the children that were brought to him”—though we may hesitate to admit with Beza that children “have the spring and seed of faith in virtue of the pro-

mise received by their Parents,"—yet is there an unprejudiced mind endowed with the just exercise of reason, which looking simply at these accumulated evidences of God's favour to children, especially to the children of the faithful, that can hesitate to say, 'certainly these promises, and these evidences denote the favour of God to the children of believers: if these promises have any meaning, they express in terms, as plain as language can convey, the precious favour of God towards the children of the faithful.' If then we admit this gracious expression even in the lowest degree, and if there be any even the lowest sense in which we can allow them to be partakers of grace, oh let us tremble lest we "offend one of these little ones" by abridging him of one privilege which may *possibly* belong to him, by withholding him from the participation of blessings to which he is *possibly* entitled, and by excluding him from that character to which he may *possibly* have a claim, as "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Rather let us take encouragement from the consideration that "whoso shall receive one such little child in the name" of Christ, receives the Saviour himself. Let the Church throw wide the arms of her benevolence, and receive every child presented to her in the name of Christ with affectionate readiness. Let Sponsors testify their love of Christ and immortal souls, by voluntarily engaging in the interesting work of training up



a child for God according to the encouragement of the promise; let them plead the promise in prayer; let them sedulously improve all the means of grace, that their charge “may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life”—and show me that man, who, upon his death-bed, though he should have witnessed no success in his labours, would repent, at that hour, that he had placed such confidence in the promise of a Covenant-God; or that his prayers and vigilance and instruction had been unwarrantably expended, or that his “labour,” could such ever be the case, had been “in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

Add to the above considerations the character of “the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God.” (1 Tim. i. 11.) It is a dispensation of grace from beginning to end; from its first origin in the love of God, before the world was, predestinating the soul to glory in Christ Jesus, through all its certain and gradual developement of mercy towards that soul, in its effectual calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, religious walk, and crowning glorification,—all is boundless love, unfathomable mercy, and “unsearchable” grace. And are not those who profess this blessed Gospel to exercise its characteristic spirit towards each other? If there be a doubt upon this interesting subject, whether the promises of God do indeed embrace the children of believers, does not the spirit of love, and considerate kindness and condescending pity, which characterises the Gospel, enforce the adoption

of the same heavenly spirit, in those who profess it, and compel us rather to give the benefit of the doubt in favour of mercy, than in favour of exclusion, and privation? and if that lovely Charity which “believeth all things, and hopeth all things,” (1 Cor. xiii. 7.) were standing at the door of the Congregation, and two believing Parents were to offer her their Child for acceptance, that he might enjoy the seal of the promise, and the benefit of communion with the Church, could she send them away with this cheerless dismissal? “You have brought your child here upon the ground of the promise made to the children of believers; but doubts are entertained whether such children have any just claim to so great a privilege; to these doubts we give the most unfavourable interpretation; we will receive *you*, but as to your child, we acknowledge no title that it can have to the blessings of grace: it has no covenant privileges; the promises avail it nothing.’ Rather would she not cast wide her arms, like the Saviour of old, and say, ‘It is true, some entertain doubts as to the validity of the promises to the children of believing Parents, but the very nature of the Gospel of Grace compels us to give you the benefit of the doubt, and willingly to sink the scale in favour of your child. The promises are to you and your children, for they are “to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call:” (Acts ii. 39.) we trust that he now “vouchsafes to call

this child to the knowledge of his grace and faith in him," enter—we accept him with joy, and cheerfully admit him to the communion of the Church.' How strikingly does want of faith annihilate love, and deprive the Gospel of its sweetest character! Did the love of God and man glow in our hearts, as it did in the heart of him who came to save us, should we not labour to extend the meaning of the promise to its utmost bearing? Should we not be desirous, that the faintest ray of grace should warm and enlighten our children; and would not the great principle of their education be—' See what God has done for you, oh what should you not do for him in return! Let the love of Christ constrain you, and as you are alive to God according to the promise, no longer live to yourself "but to him which died for" you "and rose again."' I know not that language affords a happier expression to designate Infant-baptism, than that which is adopted by our Church; it is God's "favourable allowance of a charitable work." Oh wrong not his favour; dishonour not his grace; suspect not his faithfulness; doubt not his love; frustrate not his mercy: all this you do, if you hesitate to accept his promise. Believing Parents and Sponsors! we call upon you to be consistent. How can you believe the Gospel and yet doubt one of its choicest promises? Why injure him in his tenderest part, the attribute of his mercy, who is the "Father of the fatherless," (Psalm lxxviii. 5.)

and “in whom the fatherless findeth mercy?” (Hos. xiv. 3.) Why injure his chiefest gift to you in providence, your other self, the impress of your own image, the creature of your most cherished affections, by hesitating to apply to him the practical benefit of those promises which adopt him into the family of Christ, and by the daily application of which he is daily encouraged to that exercise of graces, discharge of duties, and enjoyment of privileges, which by evidencing the religion of Jesus to be a reality, evidence it to be a blessing also; not an injunction harsh, repulsive, and unattainable; but the richest practical blessing the heart of man can enjoy, “full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort.”<sup>1</sup>

I should be disposed to apologise for thus gathering up the arrows of promise, and presenting them to your notice again, did not the importance of our subject imperatively demand this repetition. But the promises are my main battery, and what I am most concerned to render impregnable. It is here that my grand assailant Unbe-

<sup>1</sup> What a beautiful description do the following words give of the communion of the Primitive Church?—“And when we had accomplished those days, (at Tyre) we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and *children*, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed.” (Acts xxi. 5.)—The communion would have failed of its full sympathy had the children of the Church been absent from this interesting group.

lief directs his most vigorous and most restless attacks. And though repeated foil frustrate each repeated attack, his assaults are not therefore the less determined or the less frequent. To speak plainly, though I have found opponents to be reduced to silence, I have not found them therefore to yield; they have commonly said, "Well, I cannot believe; I cannot think that such blessed promises belong to us." I will rein the question then within a short compass. Can it be denied that believing Parents have these promises? If it can be so denied; then deny against the plainest evidence of fact that they exist in Scripture; or prove, that these promises, unlike their fellows, have no reference to us; or expunge them from the sacred page: but consider the consequence: if you still persist in bringing up your children as Christians, you are acting without warrant, without encouragement, and therefore without any well-grounded prospect of success; for if you have no promise;—your faith has no foundation, your hope has no solid support, your expectation is presumption, and your anticipation delusion. "BELIEVE" THEN, AND "BE ESTABLISHED." (Isa. vii. 9.)

Against this unyielding objection I have but one other arrow in my quiver; and happily, that is of celestial temper, and is never known to fail. Let us quit reasoning then for prayer.

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire;

Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
Which dost thy seven-fold gifts impart :  
Thy blessed Unction from above,  
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.  
Enable with perpetual light,  
The dulness of our blinded sight :  
Anoint and cheer our soiled face,  
With the abundance of thy grace."

" Lord be favourable to thy land, bring back the captivity of Jacob ; wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee ? Shew us thy mercy O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." (Psalm lxxxv.) We bless thee for the memorials of the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ in dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious bloodshedding he hath obtained to us : we bless thee that he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort. Oh may we rightly understand, duly appreciate, and specially apply thy holy Sacraments to all the blessed purposes for which they were mercifully ordained. " Assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people ; and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son. And we most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace,



that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end."

"THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE, IS THE SEED OF THE CHURCH OF GOD." <sup>1</sup>

To attempt one spiritual act, except on this ground, is PRESUMPTION; not to expect the most consummate blessedness to flow from the confident application of the promise, is UNBELIEF.

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, b. v. s. 63.

## LETTER VII.

## SENTIMENTS OF THE REFORMERS.

BUT it is highly important to ascertain whether this view of the subject of Baptism, and the interpretation given above be confirmed by the Reformers. It will therefore be my object in this Letter, with the blessing of God, first to show the concurrent testimony of our own Reformers, on this subject; and then to establish this by the united voice of the Churches of the Reformed. And as it appears to me, the result of the following extracts may be expressed in the opening words of King Edward the Sixth's Catechism. "It is the duty of them all, whom Christ hath redeemed by his death, that they not only be servants to obey, but also children to inherit." "To obey" is the duty of an inferior, "to inherit" is the privilege of a child: and it is that discharge of duty which is the rich privilege of holiness, that is the characteristic feature of the Gospel. Into this it will be seen that the Child of the believer is admitted at his Baptism.

TYNDAL, *Martyr*.

“ And to know how contrary this law is unto our nature, and how it is damnation not to have this law written in our hearts, though we never commit the deeds: and how there is no other means to be saved from this damnation than through repentance toward the law, and faith in Christ’s blood, which are the very inward baptism of our souls, and the washing and the dipping of our bodies in the water is the outward sign. The plunging of the body under the water signifieth that we repent and profess to fight against sin and lusts, and to kill them every day more and more, with the help of God, and our diligence in following the doctrine of Christ, and the leading of his spirit, and that we believe to be washed from our natural damnation in which we are born, and from all the wrath of the law, and from all the infirmities and weaknesses that remain in us, after we have given our consent unto the law, and yielded ourselves to be scholars thereof, and from all the imperfectness of all our deeds done with cold love, and from all actual sin, which shall chance on us while we enforce the contrary, and ever fight there against, and hope to sin no more. And thus repentance and faith begin at our baptism and first professing the laws of God, and continue unto our lives end, and grow as we grow in the Spirit. For the perfecter we be, the greater is our repentance, and the stronger our faith.

And thus as the Spirit and doctrine on God's part, and repentance and faith on our part beget us anew in Christ: even so they make us grow and wax perfect, and save us unto the end, and never leave us until all sin be put off, and we clean purified, and full formed and fashioned after the similitude and likeness of the perfectness of our Saviour Jesus, whose gift all is."

—" But when we believe in God, and then do all that is in our might, and not tempt him, then is God true to abide by his promise, and to help us, and perform alone, when our strength is past."—" And therefore, *because we be never taught the profession of our baptism we remain always unlearned*, as well the spirituality, for all their great clergy and high schools, as we say, as the lay people. And now because the lay and unlearned people are taught these first principles of our profession, therefore they read the Scripture, and understand and delight therein."<sup>1</sup>—" Yet there is sin remaining in us, but it is not reckoned, because of faith and of the Spirit, which fight against it: wherefore we have enough to do all our lives long to tame our bodies, and to compel the members to obey the Spirit and not the appetites: that thereby we might be like unto Christ's death and resurrection, and might fulfil our baptism, which signifieth the mortifying of sins, and the new life of grace. For this battle ceaseth not

<sup>1</sup> Fathers of the English Church, vol. i. pp. 31—33.

in us, until the last breath, and until that sin be utterly slain by the death of the body.”<sup>1</sup>

“The faith of a repentant soul in Christ’s blood doth justify only, and the sacrament standeth in as good stead as a lively preacher; and as the preacher justifieth me not, but my faith in the doctrine: even so the sign justifieth not, but the faith in the promise which the sacrament signifieth and preacheth. And to preach is all the virtue of the sacrament; and where the sacraments preach not, there they have no virtue at all. And, sir, we teach not as ye do, to believe in the sacrament *or* in the holy church, but to believe the sacrament *and* holy church.”<sup>2</sup>

FRITH, *Martyr*.

“This outward *sign* doth neither give us the Spirit of God, neither yet grace, that is, the favour of God. For if through the washing in the water, the spirit of grace were given, then should it follow, that whosoever were baptized in water should receive this precious gift; but that is not so, wherefore I must needs conclude, that this outward sign, by any power or influence that it hath, bringeth not the spirit or favour of God.—Moreover if the Spirit of God and his grace were bound unto the sacraments, then where the sacraments were ministered, there must the spirit of grace wait on; and where

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. i. p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, vol. i. p. 277.

they were not ministered should be neither spirit nor grace. But that is false, for Cornelius and all his household, received the Holy Ghost before they were baptized.—Here may we see, that as the Spirit of God lighteth where he will, neither is he bound to any thing. Yea, and this example doth well declare unto us, that the sacraments are given, to be an outward witness unto all the congregation of that grace, which is given before privately unto every man.

“ So, is baptism given before the congregation unto him, which before he receive it, hath either professed the religion of Christ, or else hath the word of promise, by the which promise he is known to be of the sensible congregation of Christ; and for this cause, when we baptize one, that is come unto the age of discretion, we ask of him whether he believe: if he answer, yea, and desire baptism, then is he baptized, so that we require faith in him before he be baptized, (which is the gift of God) and cometh of grace, and so it is an outward sign of his invisible faith, which before was given him of God. If an infant be brought unto baptism, whom his friends offer up willingly, to sanctify and fulfil the commandment and ordinance of God, we inquire of his friends before the congregation, whether they will that their child be baptized; and when they have answered, yea, then receiveth he baptism. Here also went before the promise of God, that he of his grace reputeth our infants, no less of the congregation, than the infants of the



Hebrews, *and through baptism doth the congregation receive him, which was first received through grace of the promise.* Thus may we see that baptism bringeth not grace, but doth testify unto the congregation, that he which is baptized, had such grace given him before ; so is baptism a sacrament, that is the sign of an holy thing, even a token of the grace and free mercy, which was before given him ; a visible example of invisible grace, which is done and given through the gentleness of God.”<sup>1</sup>

—“Our judgment recounteth all faithful and chosen, that seem to be ; but Christ knoweth them that are his, and them that shall forsake him.”<sup>2</sup>

“Now have we expounded the signification of baptism, which signification we may obtain only by faith, for if thou be baptized a thousand times with water, and have no faith, it availeth thee no more towards God, than it doth a goose, when she ducketh herself under the water. Therefore if thou wilt obtain the profit of baptism, thou must have faith ; that is, thou must be surely persuaded that thou art newly born again, not by water only, but by water and the Holy Ghost ; and that thou art become the child of God, and that thy sins are not imputed to thee, but forgiven through the blood and passion of Christ, according unto the promise of God. This faith have neither the devils, neither yet the wicked. For the wicked cannot believe the remission of their sins, but fall unto utter des-

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. i. pp. 384—386.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. i. p. 388.

peration, and make God a liar, as much as in them is.—And the devils cannot believe it, for they have no promise made unto them.”<sup>1</sup>

But I refer the Reader to the “Treatise on Baptism,” from whence the above extracts are taken, the whole of which is well worth his perusal.

### LANCELOT RIDLEY.

“Here is shewed, how Christ hath purged his church truly in the fountain of water, by his word. Although God of his mere mercy and goodness, without all man’s deserts, or merits, only for Christ’s sake, hath washed and purged man from sin: yet he useth a mean, by the which he cleanseth men from sin, which is by baptism in water by the word of God; and so in baptism are our sins taken away, and we from sins purged, cleansed, and regenerated in a new man, to live an holy life, according to the Spirit and will of God. It is not the water that washes us from our sins: but Christ by his word and his Spirit, given to us in baptism, that washeth away our sins, that we have of Adam by carnal nature.

—“If we be Christian men, our office is to bring every man, as much as in us is, to Christ, and that sinners may be cleansed from their sin, and be saved.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. i. p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. ii. p. 135.

CRANMER, *Archbishop, and Martyr.*

That children baptised, should believe themselves to be indeed “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven,” is the very spirit that pervades the long catechism expressly provided by the Archbishop for the use of children.

“Wherefore, good children, believe ye with all your heart in this Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord, and doubt not but that he hath suffered for our sins, and contented the justice of his Father for the same, and hath brought us again unto his favour, and made us his well-beloved children, and heirs of his kingdom. And when you be asked, How understand you the second part of the Creed? You shall answer, I believe that Jesus Christ, very God, begotten of God the Father, and very man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, which by his precious blood and holy passion hath redeemed me a miserable and damned wretch from all my sins, from death eternal, and from the tyranny of the devil, that I should be his own true subject, and live within his kingdom, and serve him in a new and everlasting life and justice, even as our Lord Christ after he rose from death to life, liveth and reigneth everlastingly.”<sup>1</sup>

“Wherefore, good children, mark well this

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. iii. p. 229.

lesson, that when ye be demanded, How understand you the third part of the Creed? Ye may answer thus: I believe that neither by man's strength, power, nor wisdom, neither by mine own endeavour, nor compass of mine own reason, I am able to believe in Jesus Christ, or to come unto him. But the Holy Ghost did call me by the word of the Gospel, and with the gifts of his grace he hath hitherto endowed me and hallowed me, and in the true faith he hath hitherto preserved and confirmed me: and this he hath not done only to me, but also he calleth and gathereth together, in the unity of one faith and one baptism, all the universal church that is here in earth, and he halloweth, keepeth and preserveth the same in the true knowledge of Christ, and faith in his promises. And in this Church he giveth free and general pardon to me, and to all that believe in him, of all our sins, offences, and trespasses; and at the last day he shall raise me, and all others that be dead, and all that died in the true faith of Jesus Christ he shall glorify in the life everlasting. Therefore to the said Holy Ghost that sanctifieth us, with the Father that made and created us, and the Son that redeemed us, be given all honour and glory, world without end. Amen."<sup>1</sup>

“Before I told you, good children, that we go not before God: we pray not first that God will be our God and our Father: but God of his

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. iii. p. 239.

inestimable mercy doth prevent us, doth call us by his word, doth call us unto faith, doth give us his Spirit, to know him for our Father and Lord, before we could think thereof and seek for God. But now, seeing that by his word and faith he hath called us, and by baptism hath grafted us in Christ, and made us members of his church, we ought not to be slothful nor idle, but study to go forward and increase in godliness, and to pray thus, "Our Father which art in heaven;" for as much as thou hast given unto us, being unworthy, thy holy Gospel, and hast chosen us, and not we thee; and seeing that thou hast sent unto us preachers, which teach unto us thy word, whereby we be sanctified and instructed in the faith, so that now we may know thee for God, and partly fulfil the first commandment: now fulfil, O Father, that thou hast begun, proceed to help us, that we may fulfil the second commandment; that is, that thy name may be hallowed, that is to say, may be honoured as holy. This prayer pleaseth God, and he heareth it, and God giveth us grace and strength that we may hallow his name." <sup>1</sup>

"Hitherto you have heard what we promise to God when we are baptized. Now learn also, I pray you, what God worketh in us by baptism, and what benefits he giveth us in the same. For baptism is not water alone, and nothing else besides, but it is the water of God, and hath his

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. iii. pp. 247, 248.

strength by the word of God, and is a seal of God's promise. Wherefore it doth work in us all those things whereunto God hath ordained it. For our Lord Jesus Christ saith, "Go and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." This God commanded his disciples to do. Wherefore by the virtue of this commandment which came from heaven, even from the bosom of God, baptism doth work in us, as the work of God. For when we be baptized in the name of God, that is as much to say, as God himself should baptize us. Wherefore we ought not to have an eye only to the water, but to God rather, which did ordain the baptism of water, and commanded it to be done in his name. For he is Almighty, and able to work in us by baptism forgiveness of our sins, and all those wonderful effects and operations for the which he hath ordained the same, although man's reason is not able to conceive the same."

"Therefore, consider, good children, the great treasures and benefits whereof God maketh us partakers when we are baptized, which be these. The first is, that in baptism our sins be forgiven us.—The second is, that the Holy Ghost is given us, the which doth spread abroad the love of God in our heart.—The third is, that by baptism the whole righteousness of Christ is given unto us, that we may claim the same as our own.—Fourthly, by baptism we die with Christ, and are buried, (as it were) in his blood and death, that we should



suffer afflictions and death, as Christ himself hath suffered.—By this which I have hitherto spoken, I trust you understand, good children, wherefore baptism is called the bath of regeneration, and how in baptism we be born again, and be made new creatures in Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

PHILPOT, *Archdeacon and Martyr.*

The whole of the letter from which the following extracts are taken, is well worth the perusal.

“But the catholic truth delivered unto us by the Scripture, plainly determineth, that all such are to be baptized as whom God acknowledgeth for his people, and voucheth them worthy of sanctification or remission of their sins. Therefore, since that infants be in the number or scroll of God’s people, and be partakers of the promise by their purification in Christ, it must needs follow thereby that they ought to be baptized, as well as those that can profess their faith. For we judge the people of God as well by the free and liberal promise of God, as by the confession of faith. For to whomsoever God promiseth himself to be their God, and whom he acknowledgeth for his, those no man without impiety may exclude from the number of the faithful. But God promiseth that he will not only be the God of such as do profess him, but also of infants, promising them his grace

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. iii. p. 295—297.

and remission of sins, as it appeareth by the words of the covenant made unto Abraham: "I will set my covenant between thee and me (saith the Lord) and between thy seed after thee in thy generations, with an everlasting covenant, to be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee." To the which covenant circumcision was added, to be a sign of sanctification, as well in children as in men: and no man may think that this promise is abrogated with circumcision and other ceremonial laws. For Christ came to fulfil the promises, and not to dissolve them. Therefore in the Gospel he saith of infants, that is, of such as yet believed not; Let the little ones come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."<sup>1</sup>

"After this will I answer to the sum of your arguments for the contrary. The first, which includeth all the rest, is, it is written; 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all creatures. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned.'"

"To this I answer, that nothing is added to God's word by baptism of children, as you pretend, but that is done which the same word doth require, for that children are accounted of Christ in the Gospel among the number of such as believe, as it appeareth by these words; "He that offendeth one of these little babes which believe in

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. iv. pp. 537, 538.

me, it were better for him to have a mill-stone tied about his neck, and to be cast into the bottom of the sea." Where plainly Christ calleth such as be not able to confess their faith, believers, because of his mere grace he reputeth them for believers. And this is no wonder so to be taken, since God imputeth faith for righteousness unto men that be of riper age: for both in men and children righteousness, acceptation, or sanctification, is of mere grace and by imputation, that the glory of God's grace might be praised."

"And that the children of faithful parents are sanctified, and among such as do believe is apparent in the 1 Cor. vii. &c. " <sup>1</sup>

"The Lord sent his apostles, at the beginning of the setting up his true religion, unto all nations, unto such as were ignorant of God, and were out of the covenant of God; and truly such persons it behoveth not first to be baptised, and afterwards taught; but first to be taught, and after baptised. If at this day we should go to the Turks to convert them to the faith of Christ, verily first we ought to teach them, and afterwards baptise such as would yield to be the servants of Christ. Likewise the Lord himself in times past did, when first he renewed the covenant with Abraham, and ordained circumcision to be a seal of the covenant, after that Abraham was circumcised. But he, when he perceived the infants also to pertain to the cove-

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. iv. p. 543.

nant, and that circumcision was the sealing up of the covenant, did not only circumcise Ishmael, his son, that was thirteen years of age, but all other infants that were born in his house, among whom we reckon Isaac.

“Even so faithful people which were converted from heathen idolatry by the preaching of the Gospel, and confessing their faith, were baptised; when they understood their children to be counted among the people of God, and that baptism was the token of the people of God, they procured also their children to be baptised. Therefore as it is written, “Abraham circumcised all the male children of his house.” Semblably we read in the Acts and the writings of the apostles, that after the master of the house was turned to the faith, all the whole house was baptised. And as concerning those which of old time were compelled to confess their faith before they received baptism, which were called catechumens, they were such as with our forefathers came from the Gentiles to the church, who being yet rude of faith, they did instruct in the principles of their belief, and afterward they did baptise them; but the same ancient fathers notwithstanding did baptise the children of faithful men, as I have already partly declared.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. iv. pp. 545, 546.

HOOPER, *Bishop and Martyr.*

“ This new life cometh not, until such time as Christ be known and received. Now to put on Christ, is to live a new life. Such, as be baptised, must remember that repentance and faith precede this external sign, and in Christ the purgation was inwardly obtained, before the external sign was given. So that there are two kinds of baptism, and both necessary. The one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation of the Holy Ghost, and this baptism is in man, when he believeth and trusteth that Christ is the only actor of his salvation. Thus be the infants examined<sup>1</sup> concerning repentance and faith, before they be baptised with water : at the contemplation of the which faith God purgeth the soul. Then is the exterior sign and deed not to purge the heart, but to confirm, manifest, and open unto the world, that this child is God’s.

“ And likewise baptism with the repetition of the words is a very sacrament and sign, that the baptised creature should die from sin all his life, as Paul writeth. (Rom. vi.) Likewise no man should condemn nor neglect this exterior sign, for the commandment’s sake ; though it have no power to purge from sin, yet it confirmeth the

<sup>1</sup> Viz. through their Sponsors.

purgation of sin, and the act of itself pleaseth God, because the receivers thereof obey the will of his commandment."

—"Thus assured of God, and cleansed from sin in Christ, he hath the livery of God given unto him, *baptism*, the which no Christian should neglect; and yet not attribute his sanctification unto the external sign. As the king's majesty may not attribute his right unto the crown, but unto God and unto his Father, who hath not only given him grace to be born into the world, but also to govern as a king in the world; whose right and title the crown confirmeth and sheweth the same unto all the world. Whereas this right by God and natural succession precedeth the coronation, the ceremony availeth nothing. A traitor may receive the crown, and yet be true king nothing the more. So a hypocrite and infidel may receive the external sign of baptism, and yet be no Christian man any the more, as Simon Magus and others." <sup>1</sup>

BRADFORD, *Prebendary and Martyr*.

"For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto thee by the death of thy Son, much more we, being reconciled shall be saved by his life." (Rom. v.) And that I should not doubt hereof, but certainly be persuaded all things to

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. v. p. 169—171.



pertain to me, where I might have been born of Turks, lo! thou wouldest I should be born of Christian parents, brought into thy church by baptism, which is the sacrament of adoption, and requireth faith as well of remission of my sins as of sanctification and holiness, to be wrought of thee in me by thy grace and holy Spirit.—For in that thou hast given to me this benefit to be thy child, undeserved, undesired on my behalf, simply and only in respect of thine own goodness and grace in Christ, lest at any time I should doubt of it, how should I but hope certainly that nothing profitable to me can be denied, in that thy power is infinite? For as thy good will is declared in adopting me, so nothing can be finally wanting me which may make for my weal (for that should improve [*disprove*] thy power to be almighty) in that thy will is so bounteously already declared; whereas my belief requireth to believe in thee the Father Almighty; in consideration whereof I should in all things behave myself as a child, rejoice in thee, praise thee, trust in thee, fear thee, serve thee, love thee, call upon thee, &c. But alas! how heavy hearted am I! how unthankful am I! how full of unbelief and doubting of this thy rich mercy! how little do I love thee, fear thee, call upon thee, &c. Oh! be merciful unto me, forgive me, good Father, for thine own sake, and grant me the Spirit of thy children, to reveal thyself unto me, and Jesus Christ thy dear Son our Lord, by whom we are made thy children, that

I may truly know thee, heartily love thee, faithfully hang upon thee in all my needs, with good hope call upon thee, render faithfully this honour to thee that thou art my God and Father, and I thy dear child, through thy grace in Christ, and so always be endued with an assured hope of thy goodness, and a faithful, obedient heart in all things to thy holy will. At thy hands, and from thee, as I must look for all things, so come I unto thee, and pray thee to give me those things which thy dear children have, and thou requirest of me, that I might come and ask them of thee, as now I do through Jesus Christ our Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

“Not only this, but also thou wouldest that I should know and believe, that by the same thy dearly beloved Son thou hast brought me from the tyranny and captivity of Satan and this sinful world, (whereof the captivity of Egypt under Pharaoh was a figure) and in his blood shed upon the cross thou hast made a covenant with me, which thou wilt never forget, that thou art and wilt be my Lord and my God : that is, thou wilt forgive me my sins and be wholly mine, with all thy power, wisdom, righteousness, truth, glory and mercy ; wherefore, although I might confirm my faith by the innumerable mercies hitherto poured upon me most abundantly, as thy children of Israel might have done, and did confirm their faith by the manifold benefits poured upon them in the

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. vi. pp. 238, 239.

desert : yet specially the seal of thy covenant, I mean thy holy sacrament of baptism, wherein thy holy name was not in vain called upon me, (O dear Father, sweet Son and Saviour Jesus Christ, and most gracious good Holy Ghost) should most assuredly confirm, and even on all sides seal up my faith of this covenant, that thou art my Lord and my God; even as Abraham and thy people of Israel did by the sacrament of circumcision, which as the Apostle calleth the seal or signal of righteousness, so dost thou call it; being but the sign of thy covenant indeed, yet thy very covenant; because as thy word is most true and cannot lie, as thy covenant is a covenant of peace infallible and everlasting; even so the sacrament and seal of the same is a most true testimonial and witness thereof.”<sup>1</sup>

“ Now to the question : a man regenerate (which we ought to believe of ourselves, I mean that we are so by our baptism, the sacrament thereof requiring no less faith); a man, I say, regenerate, that is born of God, hath the Spirit of God : and as a man born of flesh and blood hath the spirit thereof, whereby as he can stir up himself to do more and more the deeds of the flesh, so the other can, by the Spirit of God in him, stir up in himself the gifts and graces of God, to glorify God accordingly.”<sup>2</sup>

“ As I would have us often to muse upon the

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. vi. pp. 273, 274.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. vi. p. 390.

catholic church or communion of saints (whereof we may not doubt, in what state soever we be, under pain of damnation, being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) so would I have us to meditate upon the other articles following, that is, remission of sins, resurrection of the flesh, and life everlasting. It is an article of our faith to believe, that is, to be certain that our sins are pardoned; therefore doubt not thereof lest thou become an infidel. Though thou have sinned never so sore, yet now despair not, but be certain that God is thy God, that is, that he forgiveth thee thy sin.”<sup>1</sup>

JEWELL, *Bishop*.

“As princes’ seals confirm and warrant their deeds and charters, so do the sacraments witness unto our conscience, that God’s promises are true, and shall continue for ever. Thus doth God make known his secret purpose to his church; first he declareth his mercy by his word, then he sealeth it, and assureth it by his sacraments. In this word we have his promises; in the sacraments we see them.”<sup>2</sup>

“Chrysostom saith, “Christ’s baptism is Christ’s passion.” They are not bare signs; it were blasphemy so to say; the grace of God doth always work with his sacraments; but we are taught not

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. vi. p. 415.      <sup>2</sup> Ibid, vol. vii. p. 483.

to seek that grace in the sign, but to assure ourselves by receiving the sign, that it is given us by the thing signified. We are not washed from our sins by the water, we are not fed to eternal life by the bread and wine, but by the precious blood of our Saviour Christ, that lieth hid in these sacraments."

"Such a change is made in the sacrament of baptism: through the power of God's working, the water is turned into blood: they that be washed in it receive the remission of sins; their robes are made clean in the blood of the lamb. The water itself is nothing; but by the working of God's Spirit, the death and merits of our Lord and Saviour Christ, are thereby assured unto us."<sup>2</sup>

"Our children are the children of God; he is our God, and the God of our seed; they be under the covenant with us."<sup>3</sup>

"By these few it may appear, that the Sacrament maketh not a Christian, but is a seal and assurance unto all that receive it of the grace of God, unless they make themselves unworthy thereof, and that no man may despise this holy ordinance, and keep back his infants from baptism, for in so doing he procureth his own damnation."<sup>4</sup>

"Therefore a father must teach his child what God is; that he is our Father, that he hath made

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. vi. p. 488, 489.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, vol. vii. p. 497.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 499.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 500.

us, and doth feed us, and giveth us all things needful both for body and soul; that he is our Lord and therefore we must serve him, and obey him, and do nothing whereby he may be displeased; that he is our judge, and shall come to judge the quick and the dead; and that all men shall come before him, to receive according as they have done in the flesh.

“He must put his child in mind of his baptism, and teach him that it is a covenant of God’s mercy to us, and of our duty to God: that it is a mystery of our salvation, that our soul is so washed with the blood of Christ, as the water of baptism washeth our body.”<sup>1</sup>

And commenting on St. Paul’s words (1 Cor. vii.) “Now are your children holy,” he says, “his meaning is, that the children of the faithful, notwithstanding by nature they be the children of anger, yet by God’s free election they be pure and holy.”<sup>2</sup>

### *Nowell’s Catechism.*

“*Master.*—Do all generally, and without difference receive this grace?

*Scholar.*—The only faithful receive this fruit, but the unbelieving in refusing the promises offered them by God, shut up the entry against themselves, and go away empty. Yet do they not

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. vii. p. 540.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 683.



thereby make that the Sacraments lose their force and nature.

*Master.*—Tell me then briefly in what things the use of baptism consisteth?

*Scholar.*—In faith and repentance. For first, we must with assured confidence hold it determined in our hearts, that we are cleansed by the blood of Christ from all filthiness of sin, and so be acceptable to God, and that his Spirit dwelleth within us. And then we must continually with all our power and endeavour, travail in mortifying our flesh, and obeying the righteousness of God, and must by godly life declare to all men that we have in baptism, as it were, put on Christ, and have his Spirit given us.

*Master.*—Sith infants cannot by age perform those things that thou speakest of, why are they baptized?

*Scholar.*—That faith and repentance go before baptism, is required only in persons so grown in years, that by age they are capable of both. But to infants, the promise made to the church by Christ, in whose faith they are baptized, shall for the present time be sufficient; and then afterward, when they are grown to years, they must need themselves acknowledge the truth of their baptism, and have the force thereof be lively in their souls, and to be represented in their life and behaviour.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. viii. pp. 126, 127. or see the whole subject at large in No. XII. of “Helps for the Young,” containing Nowell’s Catechism, pp. 157—159.

After adopting the first part of that beautiful extract from king Edward's Catechism, given at p. 131. The SCHOLAR proceeds nearly in the same terms; "They that be steadfast, stable, and constant in this faith, were chosen and appointed, and (as we term it) predestinated to this so great felicity, before the foundations of the world were laid, whereof they have a witness within them in their souls, the Spirit of Christ the author, and therewith also the most sure pledge of this confidence." To which the Scholar adds this application of the doctrine to himself. "By the instinct of which divine Spirit, I do also most surely persuade myself that I am also, by God's good gift through Christ, freely made one of this blessed city."

*Master.*—It is sure a godly and very necessary persuasion."<sup>1</sup>

The two following extracts are taken from certain "*Prefaces, Prayers, and other godly Tracts, printed in various editions of the Geneva Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Psalter, during the reign of QUEEN ELIZABETH.*"

"*Question.*—How doth the word of God serve to draw men unto him!

*Answer.*—When it is so preached and heard, that men may understand and learn what God teacheth, accept and receive thankfully that which

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. viii. pp. 79, 80.

is thereby given, promised, and assured; and be moved with desire and diligence to do that which it commandeth.

*Question.*—Do the sacraments also serve to this end?

*Answer.*—Yea, verily; that by sight, taste, and feeling, as well as by hearing, we might be instructed, assured, and brought to obedience.

*Question.*—How doth our baptism serve hereunto?

*Answer.*—It teacheth us to put on Christ, that with his righteousness our sinfulness may be hidden; it assureth us that we are so grafted into Christ, that all our sins by him are washed away: it chargeth us to die to sin, to continue in the profession of Christ, and to love each other.

*Question.*—Hath the Lord's supper also this use?

*Answer.*—Yea, doubtless; for it teacheth that the body and blood of Christ crucified is the only food of the new-born children of God; it assureth that Christ is wholly theirs, to give and to continue life spiritual and heavenly to both body and soul, to nourish, strengthen, refresh, and to make cheerful the hearts of the elect, it requireth thankful remembrance of the death of Christ, unity among those that do profess him, with a free profession of his truth.

*Question.*—Why is not this use of the Sacraments commonly known?

*Answer.*—Because they are abused for form, for

fashion, for custom, and company, without regard unto the word, whereunto they are so annexed, that they ought not upon any necessity by any person be severed from it, which teacheth the right use of every thing.”<sup>1</sup>

PETER MARTYR, *Professor of Divinity at Oxford.*

“Note here that the Fathers made a league with God, not only for themselves but also for their posterity, as God again for his part promised them, that he would be the God not only of them, but also of their seed and posterity; wherefore it was lawful for them to circumcise their children, being yet infants. And in like manner, it is lawful for us to baptise our little ones, being yet infants, forasmuch also as they are comprehended in the league. For they which have now the thing itself, there is nothing that can let, but that they may receive the sign: it is manifestly written in xxix. chap. of Deut. that the league was made not only with them which were present, but also with them which were absent and not yet born.”—On Judges. fol. 75.<sup>2</sup>

The attentive Reader cannot but be struck with the general consistency of the doctrine of Baptism as represented in the foregoing extracts,

<sup>1</sup> Fathers, &c. vol. viii. pp. 203, 204.

<sup>2</sup> See “Marbeck’s Common Places,” under the head “Baptism.”

with that expressed in our Baptismal Service and its kindred formularies. The Child is a child of God in virtue of the promise to his faithful Parents; as such he receives the sign of the covenant in Baptism; and he is urged to a holy life in consistency with his profession; not in his own strength, but as “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.”

These sentiments of our Forefathers of the Reformation respecting Baptism, will receive ample confirmation from the concurrent sentiments of the Reformed Churches throughout Christendom in their day. I extract the following testimonies from “An Harmony of the Confessions of the faith of the Christian and Reformed Churches which purelie professe the holie doctrine of the Gospell in all the chiefe Kingdomes, Nations, and Provinces of Europe,—allowed by publique authoritie,” and “imprinted by Thomas Thomas, printer to the Universitie of Cambridge, 1586.” And should these testimonies not be deemed sufficient, I must refer to the “Corpus Confessionum” for any further evidence that may be required.

*The latter Confession of Helvetia.*

“There is but one baptism in the church of God: for it is sufficient to be once baptized or consecrated unto God. For baptism once re-

ceived doth continue all a man's life, and is a perpetual sealing of our adoption unto us. For to be baptized in the name of Christ, is to be enrolled, entered, and received into the covenant, and family, and so into the inheritance of the sons of God, yea and in this life to be called after the name of God, that is to say, to be called the son of God, to be purged also from the filthiness of sins, and to be endued with the manifold grace of God, for to lead a new and innocent life. Baptism therefore doth call to mind, and keep in remembrance the great benefit of God performed to mankind, for we are all born in the pollution of sin and are the sons of wrath. But God who is rich in mercy, doth freely purge us from our sins by the blood of his Son, and in him doth adopt us to be his sons, and by an holy covenant doth join us to himself, and doth enrich us with divers gifts, that we might live a new life. All these things are sealed up unto us in baptism.

“ We condemn the Anabaptists who deny that young infants born of faithful parents, are to be baptized. For according to the doctrine of the gospel “ this is the kingdom of God.” And they are written in the covenant of God. And why then should not the sign of the covenant be given to them? Why should they not be consecrated by holy baptism, who are God's peculiar people, and in the Church of God? ”



*The former Confession of Helvetia.*

“Baptism, according to the institution of the Lord, is the font of Regeneration, the which the Lord doth give to his chosen in a visible sign, by the ministry of the Church in such sort, as we have declared before. In which holy font we do therefore dip our infants, because that it is not lawful for us to reject them from the company of the people of God, which are born of us, (who are the people of God) so long as they be not pointed out by the voice of God, especially seeing that we ought godly to presume of their election.”

*The Confession of Bohemia.*

“For we believe that whatsoever by baptism, as by a Sacrament added to the word of the gospel, is in the outward ceremony signified and witnessed, all that doth the Lord God work and perform inwardly : that is, that he washeth away sin, begetteth a man again, and bestoweth salvation upon him, and through the washing of water cleanseth by the word the society of his Church, cloatheth and appareleth it with his Son, burieth and taketh away sin, and giveth testimony to, and sealeth the peace of a good conscience, &c.

“And although Baptism in the primitive Church was for the most part ministered to such, as were well grown and of discretion, after a con-

fession of faith made by them, according to Christ's commandment; yet this is taught, that young children also, who are reckoned in the number of God's people, in like sort are by this ministry to be benefited toward the attaining of salvation, that they likewise may be consecrated and dedicated to Christ, according to this commandment, when he saith, "Suffer ye the little ones to come to me, and forbid them not: because unto such belongeth the kingdom of God." Therefore according to the word of the Lord, and many other testimonies and other promises made to this beloved age of children, especially when as also there is extant an example of that ancient ministry ordained of God, to wit, circumcision, which by the covenant belonged not only to those of discretion, but therewithal also to young children. For these causes do our ministers without any doubt and boldly baptize children in the name of the Holy Trinity, applying unto them a sign of most effectual virtue, and a most sure witness-bearing of that thing which by Christ's own words is assigned to this age, and is imparted unto it. For so Christ in general, and without exception giveth in charge, not touching some, but touching all, "Teach ye all nations, and baptise them, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." And so over children this most holy name is called upon, in which alone there is salvation."

*The French Confession.*

“ Furthermore, although Baptism be a Sacrament of faith and repentance, yet seeing that God doth together with the parents account their posterity also to be of the Church, we affirm, that infants, being born of holy Parents, are by the authority of Christ to be baptized.

“ We say therefore that the element of water, be it never so frail, doth notwithstanding truly witness or confirm unto us the inward washing of our souls in the blood of Jesus Christ, by the virtue and efficacy of the Holy Ghost.”

*The Confession of Belgia.*

“ Neither doth this baptism profit us only at that moment when the water resteth upon us, and when we are sprinkled with it, but it is available throughout the whole time of our life. Therefore here we do detest the error of the Anabaptists, who are not only content with one only baptism, and that once received, but do also condemn the baptism of infants, yea of those that be born of faithful Parents: but we by the same reason do believe that they ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, for the which in time past the infants among the Israelites were circumcised, that is, by reason of the same promises made unto our infants, that were made unto

others. And verily Christ hath no less shed his blood to wash the infants of the faithful, than he did for the washing of those that are of riper years. Therefore it is meet that they should receive the sign or sacrament of the thing which Christ hath wrought for their sakes, as in the law the Lord commandeth, that the sacrament of the death and passion of Christ should be communicated to children new born, by offering up the lamb for them which was a sacrament of Christ to come. (Levit. xii. 6.) Furthermore that which circumcision did perform to the people of the Jews, the same did baptism perform to the children of the faithful. For the which cause Paul calleth Baptism, “ the circumcision of Christ.”

*The Confession of Augsburg.*

“ Concerning baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, as a ceremony ordained of Christ. Also that by baptism the grace of God is offered. And that young infants are to be baptized, and that they being by baptism commended unto God, are received into God’s favour, and are made the sons of God as Christ witnesseth, speaking of little children in the Church, (Matt. xviii.) “ It is not the will of your heavenly Father, that any of these little ones should perish.” They condemn the Anabaptists, which allow not the baptism of infants, and hold that infants are saved, though they die without baptism, and be not within the Church of God.”

*The Confession of Saxony.*

“ We do also baptise infants, because it is most certain that the promise of grace doth pertain also of (to) infants, and to those only which are ingrafted into the Church, because that of these it said, “ Suffer little ones to come unto me, because that to such appertaineth the kingdom of heaven.” And Origen writeth upon the sixth of the Romans, “ That the Church received the custom of baptising infants from the apostles.” Neither do we think that this custom is only an idle ceremony, but that the infants are then indeed received and sanctified of God, because that then they are grafted into the Church, and the promise pertaineth to such. And of this matter there be many things written and published in our Churches, whereby the Anabaptists are refuted.”

*The Confession of Wirtemberg.*

“ We acknowledge that Baptism is to be ministered as well to infants as to those that are grown to full age, and that it is to be used in the Church, even to the end of this world, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to Christ his institution,” &c.

—“ Moreover we teach, that he which is baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is sprinkled with a

spiritual anointing, that is, is made a member of Christ through faith; and endued with the Holy Ghost, that the ears of his mind may be opened, and the eyes of his heart lightened, to receive and understand heavenly things," &c.

*The Confession of Sueveland.*

"And seeing that Baptism is a sacrament of that covenant, which God hath made with those that be his, promising that he will be their God, and the God of their seed, and that he will be a revenger of wrongs and take them for his people; to conclude, seeing it is a token of the renewing of the Spirit, which is wrought by Christ: therefore our Preachers do teach, that it is to be given to Infants also, as well as that in times past under Moses they were circumcised: for we are indeed the children of Abraham, and therefore that promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed," doth no less pertain unto us, than it did to that ancient people."

To the above I add the following extracts from the Articles of Religion of the United Church of England and Ireland.

*Of the Sacraments.*

"Sacraments ordained of Christ, be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather, they be certain sure witnesses, and



effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him."

*Of Baptism.*

"Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of Regeneration, or New Birth, whereby as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

From the above extracts it appears—

First, that the child is introduced to the Church for Baptism, as the child of believing Parents, in virtue of the promise made to them.

Secondly, That Baptism is the sign and seal of the faith which the child possesses in virtue of the election of grace.

Thirdly, That Christian Baptism is but Jewish Circumcision expressed under another outward and visible sign, "For the which cause Paul calleth Baptism the Circumcision of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Confession of Belgia.

Lastly, That no doubt should be entertained as to the child's condition: he is an adopted child of God, and should be esteemed and educated as such.

Compare these particulars with the letter and spirit of our Baptism and its kindred formularies, and how exactly do they agree !

## LETTER VIII.

ADVANTAGES WHICH MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO  
ARISE FROM THE ABOVE INTERPRETATION OF  
OUR BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

THE advantages which might be expected to arise from the practical adoption of the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service, are neither few nor doubtful; the practice will amply vindicate the principle, for as we BELIEVE, so will it appear that we shall be ESTABLISHED.

THE FIRST ADVANTAGE arising from the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service is, that—  
IT RENDERS ALL OUR FORMULARIES INTELLIGIBLE.

It puts a sense and a meaning into them fully equal to their expressions: and while it gives those expressions their plain and natural meaning, it justifies them from the charge of being too strong and intense; since, after all, they do but inadequately convey the unquestionable privileges, and “unsearchable riches” of the Gospel of Christ.

It is vain to dissemble, My Dear Friend, that we have ourselves found considerable difficulty in reconciling the several formularies of our Church with each other; and that we have for years been accustomed to hear a variety of complaints and doubts as to the consistency of our Liturgy. What various interpretations have been given of the Baptismal Service! To what difficulties have those been reduced, who, teaching that our salvation depends on our strict obedience to the Law, would bend the letter of the Catechism and the Confirmation Service, to the support of this mistaken system! And how many have been confounded, that our Liturgy, in its various Services, assumes all who use it to be real believers in Christ Jesus, and that it makes no provision for neutral characters, or for any but penitent and believing sinners! The Service for "the Visitation of the Sick" has been constantly reproached as inapplicable to the great proportion of cases, which the Minister, in the discharge of his duty, is called upon to attend; and the Burial Service has been the repeated theme of complaint, both with friends and foes, that it can with propriety be read over real believers alone. And have not good and intelligent Ministers of our Church been driven to such distress of mind by these doubts and perplexities, as to hesitate, whether they could, consistently with the claims of a safe conscience, continue to minister her Services? If you, My Dear Friend, have been happily exempt from

the trial, I must confess, that such doubts have arisen in my own mind, and in those of some excellent men with whom I have conversed on this subject; nor were such doubts ever dissipated from my mind, till the above view of the Baptismal Service furnished a clue of interpretation, which admitted me to the meaning of every subsequent formulary, and with that meaning, displayed the beauty and consistency of the whole.

How perfectly intelligible then is our whole Liturgy viewed from the portal of Baptismal regeneration—faith in the promise covenanted to the children of believers. Fix your eye but upon this entrance, and all the beautiful edifice rises in simple integrity, and commanding majesty before you. In BAPTISM “we being persuaded of the good-will of our heavenly Father towards this Infant, declared by his Son Jesus Christ, and nothing doubting but that he favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing this Infant to his holy Baptism;” in the CATECHISM we proceed consistently to teach him, that he was then “made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an Inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” and that the Holy Ghost even at this present sanctifieth,” or is “sanctifying him, and all the elect people of God.” At his CONFIRMATION, the Bishop accepts him as a believer, as “regenerate by water and the Holy Ghost;” as “given forgiveness of all” his “sins;” and with the Church prays the “Lord” to “strengthen” him “with

the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increase in" him "his manifold gifts of grace." In "THE COMMUNION," he is privileged to say with the Church, "We most heartily thank thee, for that thou dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people.—And we most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy Grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship," &c. In THE LITURGY, the whole language and spirit is suited to a child of God addressing a Father of mercy. In addition to the passages already adduced in page 154, the following selections from the Collects can only be pleaded by a believer: "grant that we being regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit;"<sup>1</sup> "mercifully grant that we which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead."<sup>2</sup> And at the "solemnization of MATRIMONY," he is recognised as belonging to "the Communion of the Saints." "We are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face

<sup>1</sup> On the Nativity.

<sup>2</sup> On the Epiphany. See also the Collects for Good-Friday, Easter-Even, Easter-day, Ascension-day, Trinity-Sunday, and All-Saints day: indeed those Collects are rather exceptions, where the expressions are not peculiar and appropriate to believers.



of this Congregation to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony;" and the Church prays for them both in the character of believers, "O Lord, save thy servant and thy handmaid, who put their trust in thee." In "THE CHURCHING OF WOMEN, the Congregation prays for "the woman" who "shall come into the Church," "O Lord, save this woman, thy servant; who putteth her trust in thee." In THE VISITATION OF THE SICK the same words are repeated, and the whole office is calculated for the encouragement and spiritual establishment of the believer. And in "THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD," the crowning work of a holy assurance is accomplished over the believer by "the Communion of the Saints," when they conclude their earthly intercourse, by giving "heartly thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our Brother out of the miseries of this sinful world." From the beginning to the end of this exquisite display of order, the same principle appears in active promineney,—a saint is introduced into "the Communion of the Saints" at Baptism, and in this holy character he is uniformly entertained by the Church, so long as he can be a partaker of her communion, and till her means of grace have under the divine blessing perfected him for glory. I am not aware that any force is put upon a single expression in any one of our formularies by the above explanation: all is natural, harmonious, lucid, consistent, and intelligible: it is an interpretation which a

child may comprehend. Let us only enter by the portal of Baptismal regeneration in faith of the promise, and the key is in our hands, which opens the door of every apartment, in orderly succession, and admits us with ease, into all the beautiful interior of the building.

Hence necessarily follows ANOTHER ADVANTAGE of the above interpretation,—AN INTELLIGIBLE EXHIBITION OF THE BEAUTY AND SYMMETRY AND ADMIRABLE PROPORTION OF THE CHURCH TO WHICH WE BELONG.

What other interpretation exhibits it in a light so truly lovely and desirable, and so excellently adapted to man as a fallen and helpless creature upon earth? Particular prayers with their peculiar comprehensiveness, accurate arrangement, and felicitous expression may arrest our attention, and particular Services may receive our commendation; but the excellency of a magnificent edifice does not appear so much in the minute perfection of its parts, as in the concurrence of each particular part in producing an imposing whole. Nay, so far may those parts, when detached from the body, be from engaging our approbation, that they may incur our reproach, as disproportioned, inappropriate, and useless; nay as wholly inapplicable and unfit: as it is well known that some of our formularies, when viewed as detached portions, have frequently been esteemed. But viewed from this point, the whole edifice rises before us in admirable beauty and exquisite proportion. Each

part has its appropriate place ; and every distinct member conduces to the symmetry and stability of the whole. Let our Church be presented to the people of the land in this engaging aspect, and let the real excellence of her system be recommended to them by the practical application of her blessings ; let it be wrought out in all its winning experience, and let its advantages be but once felt, by active and persevering efforts on the part of us who are Ministers to introduce them to the notice of our charge ; and what an intelligible ground of preference, of esteem and attachment would be presented to the people ! Popular attachment then, would not rest on the fickle grounds of fashion, education, prejudice, and custom, or on the more rational grounds of regard for things constituted, of political expediency, and national advantage ; but on the real spiritual blessedness, which such a system, practically and experimentally applied must necessarily confer, and on all the virtues and graces, which, taking their rise in the tranquillity of the domestic circle, would gradually expand, till they reached the remotest relations and conditions of social life. It would be grace, pouring out its rich abundance of blessings from each paternal roof, till it met in one vast confluence, not of national merely, but of international benignity and love. Such, I own, My Dear Friend, have been long my grounds of attachment to our Church. I know nothing human, as a system of spiritual means, in any mea-

sure comparable to her. I am not insensible to her defects, and I do most sincerely deplore them ; while, at the same time, I cannot but admire her capabilities of usefulness, her well-adapted machinery, and her unrivalled ability, not only to bless this distinguished country, but the whole earth, to every part of which, the spiritual or unspiritual condition of England, at this hour, in God's mysterious providence is imparting a corresponding character and complexion. Yes, indeed, I believe our Church to be "the Eldest Daughter of the Reformation:" it is a high designation, but it is one, to which, I believe, she can well vindicate her claim ; and while we are able practically to display her excellences in ameliorating the moral condition of her people, we are adopting the most certain means of securing their attachment, and perpetuating their support.

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE resulting from the above interpretation is, that—IT EXHIBITS IN LIVELY REALITY THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE "COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS."

I say, *reality*, for what reality is presented to the people, loosely and imperfectly apprehended as this communion is at present ? It is true the expression occurs in the Creed, and is often repeated by the lips ; but how few seem to attach any intelligible meaning to it ! and how little can usually be collected by the interpretation of these words, when expressed in these indefinite and unmeaning generals, "a partaking of the common

benefits and privileges of Christianity!" What are these common benefits and privileges? Are they the means of grace merely, and a partaking of the outward and visible sign? or are they the real spiritual virtues of which these means are but the medium—the inward and spiritual grace, of which the visible representation of the Sacraments is but the outward sign? But once admit the interpretation above given, and no doubt, or uncertainty, or indistinctness remain. On the ground of the promise, faith beholds the baptised introduced into "the Communion of the Saints." The faith of the believing Parents hath sanctified the Child, "else were" their "children unclean, but now are they holy:" (1 Cor. vii. 14.) and the Church has acknowledged this application of the promise, by admitting the Child into its bosom, and making it a partaker of its sympathies, its interests, its prayers, and its praises. Nor does it relax the interests of this communion in its subsequent instruction and edification, from infancy to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to age. The interest once imparted never declines: it is a communion in Christ, and so long as each is grafted into him by faith, being members of him, they are also members one of another. How truly blessed would be the intercourse of every parish among us, did it but present the character which our Church assumes it to do! We should then meet each other not contented with inquiring after the bodily health of ourselves

and children ; the second question, at least, would be expressive of our Christian communion, and we should mutually inquire as to the spiritual welfare of our souls : and if the latter question were answered satisfactorily as to the soul, the welfare of the soul would be the measure of that we should wish to the body, according to the Apostle's words ; " Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 2.) The health of the soul would then be deemed more important than that of the body ; and our inquiries after each other's children, would chiefly consist as to their possessions of those graces which are the common benefit of the " Communion of the Saints," to which we trust they belong. And is it really wild and enthusiastic, to assume, with our Church, that the whole of the baptised in her communion may become " that blessed company of faithful people " which forms the true Church of Christ ? It appears to me, that either this is her meaning, according to the plain interpretation of her letter, or that all her Services are a mockery. And if this be her meaning, with what show of reason or propriety can we hope for that holy state of society, to which she would elevate her people, unless we act faith upon those promises which she places as the foundation of every spiritual blessing ? Let us at least do our part, act consistently with the vows made for us, and those we have made for others in Baptism, and leave the honour of his



own faithfulness, and the credit of his own word to God.

ANOTHER evident ADVANTAGE attending this interpretation of the Baptismal Service received and acted upon, would be,—THE IMPROVED ADMINISTRATION OF THE WHOLE SERVICE OF OUR CHURCH.

Do our Congregations present a lively picture of that worship which might be expected in “the Communion of the Saints?” Have we not often heard the Service complained of as dry, wearisome, uninteresting, and as incapable of arresting the attention? and has not the appearance of the Congregation, drowsy, inattentive, and indifferent, too frequently proved, that they at least have felt the Service to be such as is above described? And have not Ministers complained that it is difficult to keep up their attention while the same routine work is to be performed? And has not this defect too often become apparent in the heavy listlessness, and dull monotony, and evident want of interest with which the Service has been conducted? But let the above interpretation prevail and be maintained, and a sense of the “Communion of Saints” would, with the aid of the Spirit, be maintained, which would infuse new life and sense and intelligence into the ministration of our Service, however frequently repeated. How few seem to attend “the assembling of ourselves together,” (Heb. x. 25.) with any lively impression that they are about to enjoy that communion with the

Church, in the great Congregation, which most honours God? Does the Minister approach the desk animated by a sense of the privilege bestowed on him in leading the devotion of "the Communion of Saints?" Do the people approach the church with any similar impression, that they are privileged to enjoy this delightful communion? Does either the one or the other, under the pleasing anticipations of this enjoyment, offer up a prayer as they go up to the house of God, any "song of degrees"—"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.—For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, peace be within thee?" (Psalm cxxii. 1, 8.) Did Minister and people go up with this heavenly spirit, how different would the whole strain of our worship be, both in heart and lip! The excellence of our Service would then appear in its own characteristic simplicity and beauty. There is no wearisomeness in the Service: alas! our unspiritual hearts are indisposed for spiritual communion, either with God or man, and hence inattention, distraction, and fatigue. But let us once realise the impression, that we are about to enjoy the richest communion that earth presents, and both Minister and people, with awakened expectations, will endeavour to excite corresponding affections. Then secret but fervent aspirations will arise to the great Master of Assemblies in our way to his temple, "Awake, O north wind, and come thou south: blow upon my garden that

the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits." (Song of Solomon, iv. 16.) We should take our places among a holy brotherhood, and offer up a fervent prayer both for ourselves, our Minister, and our fellow-christians, that the season might be a delight to our souls, and that the Spirit of Christ would cause us to say, "It is good for us to be here." (Matt. xvii. 4.) The minutes before the commencement of the Service would be improved, in pleading the opening promises to penitent sinners: "When the wicked man," &c. 'Lord, I am a wicked man; my thoughts, my words, my acts, are wicked; but I desire to turn away from my wickedness, and to do that which thy holy law approves; turn me, O Lord, and I shall be turned; and "save" my "soul alive."' Filled with this penitent concern, with what interest and advantage would the Minister begin his address, more especially inviting his people to the confession of sin; and with what heartfelt humility in the presence of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of each other, would they join in the "General Confession!" after the "Absolution," with what peculiar meaning, as expressive of "the Communion of Saints," would the Lord's prayer open, "Our Father," the Father of all saints, of the whole Church of believers upon earth, for which we pray, that it may embrace every living soul, "thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven!" with what

holy energy would the Minister utter, "O Lord, open thou our lips," and the people answer, "and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise!" and after the intermediate sentences, with what appropriate exultation would they repeat, "O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation!" Each psalm, as the Service proceeded, would find a corresponding character of prayer or praise in our hearts; each lesson would be read, according to its peculiar character of simple narrative, earnest conversation, authoritative precept, or encouraging promise; rejecting equally the pompous and turgid manner, as the indifferent and negligent. And after each portion of God's holy word, what heartfelt bursts of praise for the same would find expression in the respective songs of praise? "We praise thee, O God," and "O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands." The Creed would then be the concurrent confession of faith of each individual in the Congregation; and "I believe, issuing with grateful acknowledgment from each particular Christian, would declare the united faith of the Church. And after a solemn pause, how would Minister and people provoke each other to renewed devotion; the Minister affectionately and pointedly pronouncing this blessing on the people, "The Lord be with you," and the people returning the blessing, "and with thy spirit!"<sup>1</sup> It is unneces-

<sup>1</sup> I have seen this done with most awakening effect: after the Creed, the Minister made a pause which was evidently

sary to add more ; enough has been said, to show that on the above interpretation, with the aid of the Holy Ghost, a new character would be given to “ the assembling of ourselves together,” and that public worship among us, instead of being the cold and formal thing it is too often at present, without intelligence and therefore without enjoyment, would then be a “ blessed company of faithful people,” enjoying the privileges of divine communion in all the rich and varied devotion afforded by our Church. Religion being felt as a reasonable service,—an intelligible service, would, with God’s blessing, be a spiritual service also. No man can enjoy what he does not understand. But let this interpretation of our Baptismal Service once be carried into general practice, and maintain its own proper place in our worship, and a luminous intelligence would pervade our whole Liturgy, which, with the blessing of the Spirit, would convince every worshipper of the reality of “ the Communion of the Saints,” by his own individual experience of the blessings which that communion was actually bestowing on himself. The Church of England would then exhibit **THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS** indeed.

So administered, and so felt, would the Services felt : then with a voice and manner of affectionate earnestness, he resumed the attention of his people to prayer, by wishing them the presence of the Spirit, and the people acknowledged the blessing, by praying that the Holy Spirit might be with their Minister’s spirit in return.

of our Church be any longer complained of as tedious and tiresome !

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE arising from this interpretation of our Baptismal Service would spring directly from that above stated : for the blessings of the “ Communion of Saints ” being once felt, we should naturally be desirous of cultivating them, by A MORE FREQUENT OBSERVANCE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

Men are in public what they are first in private ; and “ where was public virtue to be found where private was not ? ” Closet duties would be more attended to ; and closet piety, the piety of the heart, communion with God in meditation and prayer more encouraged. Religious knowledge would then consist, not in the stores derived from a multiplicity of books merely ; but in that heavenly possession, THE WORD OF GOD, made our own by meditation and spiritual digestion, dwelling in us richly, and flowing out in a blessed benignity of word and act to all around us ; and every Christian would then exhibit that best literature which Herbert ascribes to a Minister, “ The Parson’s library is a holy life.” It would be knowledge diffusing itself in a holy experience of peace and love. Our houses would present means of grace, not only in the stated meeting of the family for purposes of devotion, but every meal would be a means of grace ; the topics of conversation receiving a divine tendency and complexion from the holy principles within. All the



subjects of human art and science, and that master-subject as to man, political economy combined with history, being all secondary and subservient to the one grand design, the advancement of human happiness and the glory of God in the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth. How delightful would social intercourse then be, when "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another," (Mal. iii. 16,) and the subject of their conversation was, how they might most "let" their "light shine before men," that thus seeing their "good works" they might "glorify" their "Father which is in Heaven!" (Matt. v. 16.) And what praise would then be of God in "the great Congregation!" We could not then consent to confine our Church assemblies to one day in the week; every day must then be refreshed by at least one public Service in the parochial church. It is evident that the advantages of a holy communion would be ever endeavouring to enlarge and to perpetuate themselves; and this could alone be done, under God, by presenting religion more frequently and more attractively to the people. Five times in the day, it is said, does the Mow-eden ascend the minaret of the mosque and call the Mohamedans to prayers. The Roman Catholics are ever presenting the exterior of religion to their people: the churches are open during a great part of the day either for public service, or the admission of private worshippers; the bells are addressing the ear, the host or the crucifix the

eye; and in some form or other the exterior of their religion [meets the senses of their worshippers. And has it not a deadening and infidel effect upon our Protestant population, that during six days of the week, religion is, with us, almost excluded from our view; except in some Towns the bells ringing for prayers on two days in the week; an occasional toll at the death or burial of a neighbour, or the place of worship, or the house or the person of the Minister, reminding us of religious ministrations? The infrequency of our public meetings for worship, is both the evidence and cause of our present low condition of spiritual communion. Provision is made in our Liturgy for morning and evening Service on every day of the year: and, as it is easy to see, that, with the decline of this practice, vital godliness has declined among us, so it is as easy to see that with the adoption of this practice, or of that which approximates to it, the establishment of weekly lectures in the church, or religious assemblies in private, vital godliness is on the increase among us. Without the means of grace, we cannot expect grace to abound; and did we value "the Communion of Saints," the principal means of that communion would necessarily be cultivated. Again our churches would be opened daily; and the Church at this day would resemble that of old, of which it is said, "they were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." (Luke xxiv. 53.)

Such was the practice of our Reformers: and if

we would have the times of the Reformers we must have the Reformers' principles, and the Reformers' practice.

I know it may be said, that the industry and energies of the country are so occupied in trade and agriculture at this day, that it would be a vain attempt to reduce the people to this practice of our ancestors. But is not this rather the voice of avarice, clamorous to engross every portion of time for human exertion, except that portion which is absolutely necessary to maintain and recruit it? It is a most fatal mistake in a Christian country, to suppose that national wealth and national prosperity are synonymous terms. A visit to our manufacturing districts would soon dissipate this delusion in every unprejudiced mind; where it is but too evident, that human prudence and human happiness bear no proportion to excessive wages and exorbitant means.<sup>1</sup> Less wealth

<sup>1</sup> An incident that has happened this day, (Feb. 23, 1827.) while I am preparing the above for the press, will amply illustrate my meaning. A poor Irish woman with a child at her breast, while applying at my door for relief, sunk down in a state of utter exhaustion. On recovering she declared that she had been without food for four-and-twenty hours, that her husband was too ill to work, and that the family was starving. On visiting them, I found them in the most squalid condition of pauperism; the man disabled from disease, the room destitute, cheerless, and dirty, and the children filthy and unmanageable. On inquiry I found that the man, when in health, could earn from twenty to thirty shillings per week, that his wife was a Protestant, and he a

and more piety, by diminishing temptation on the one hand, and supplying means of moral amelioration on the other, would make them a far happier population than they are. Never let it be forgotten for a moment, while human happiness is the subject of our consideration, that it is Christianity

Roman Catholic ; that he had been in England eight years, but that neither of them had attended any place of worship, not having been able to purchase decent clothes. On informing the man, that on the lowest calculation of his earnings, he had an income of £52. per annum, which with a wife and two children should not only have enabled him to live in comfort, but also to have laid up a reserve for sickness, in a Savings' Bank ; he seemed quite astonished. The fact was, that brutish ignorance had begotten improvidence, and improvidence pauperism. His want was that of a spiritual principle to have taught him those habits which should have improved his means. Christ crucified, received into the hearts of this couple, as the seed of spiritual life, would have elevated them and their family from a state of degradation little better than that of the brute, and have induced those habits which would have provided them with every necessary comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter. But no such sound had reached them : for they were living in a dense population, where in each apartment was a family, and in a Parish consisting of nearly forty-thousand persons. Is it either policy or justice to go on, as we do, transporting and hanging such a population ? Surely their pitiable ignorance demands rather the aggressive kindness of a domiciliary visit from the unwearied perseverance of a Christian Minister to enlighten them with holy principles, than the unsparring rigour of an inflexible jurisprudence to punish them for offences which they have scarcely been taught to consider such, and to the commission of which not a few of them have been regularly trained from their infancy.

alone which sets up a due standard of civilization ; a standard which is as far removed from the fastidiousness of an excessive refinement, as it is from the rudeness of a ferocious barbarism ; and that a pause in the midst of the hurry and distraction of business, which our Church proposes in the morning and evening Services of each day, while it broke through the engrossment of worldly habits, and tempered the keenness of secular pursuits, would also sanctify our daily occupations, and, with God's blessing, introduce holy principles and practices into the ordinary commerce of life. Trade and agriculture have nothing in them more peculiarly repulsive to a holy communion than any other modification of human agency in which the life of man is past, and by which his well-being is promoted : but as they afford a large field for the display of avarice and selfishness, every day's experience but too evidently proves that they need the powerful counteracting influence of grace to moderate and restrain them. So far then are our increased energies from being a reason that the frequent religious assemblies of our ancestors should be discontinued, that they are in fact a more urgent reason for their renewal ; since if the world has indeed so fully engrossed our attention, the everlasting welfare of our souls demands a proportionate counteraction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The comparative condition of the *manufacturing* and the *agricultural* labourer has a strong claim on the most patient consideration of the political economist. The one seems to

But it may be said, you could not prevail on the people to attend; the Service would be performed to bare walls. I do not believe that this objection would hold long, if the privileges of "the Communion of the Saints" were practically exhibited, and the real Gospel of mercy and peace were offered in all its attractive loveliness. If, in addition to the prayers, a familiar exposition of some portion of Scripture were orderly given, say, a Gospel or Epistle, or a book of the Prophets, the Minister opening the spiritual sense of the words

have risen to the attainment of *luxuries* unfit for his condition, while the other has in proportion, been sinking into a state of pauperism which admits of little more than *necessaries*, if it can indeed be said to admit even of them. Excessive wages have elevated the one to luxuries which corrupt him; defective wages have depressed the other to dependence and pauperism, which deprive him of industrious effort under the pressure of despair. It seems clear that the most commanding state of commerce is not national prosperity, if that prosperity be measured, as it should be, by the general well-being of the community. Much less is national wealth national security. Where is Tyre? Where is Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency," with its "head of gold?" Where are all the empires which succeeded it? Fallen—and that, not because they were not rich, but because their moral bore no proportion to their temporal wealth. And if England would enjoy either prosperity or security, she must, with her quarterly returns of revenue, adopt a quarterly return of morals also. Wealth, untempered by morality, can but produce excess; and excess, by corrupting the moral resources of a people, has been the grand destroyer of all the nations that have preceded us, as history amply testifies.—Aug. 1825.



in one continuous explanation, by which, in course of time, the whole sense of the complete Bible were laid before the people; and if this exposition were accompanied by an interesting, short, and pithy extemporaneous application, familiarly and affectionately brought home to their respective bosom and business; and thus the whole Service rendered interesting and impressive,—might we not hope that the Holy Spirit would acknowledge this renewed spiritual agency with his blessing, and induce such an attendance as would soon evidence that the Minister had not run in the path of his forefathers in vain.

Two striking advantages would result from this practice, the first to the ministry: for let this habit of familiar exposition but once prevail among us, and the unnatural and unsocial, and therefore uninteresting practice of written sermons would gradually cease; and extemporaneous expression once become habitual, would also become familiar and easy. Is it not by listening to a graceless fastidiousness, and to that corrupt taste and scholastic frigidity which prefer correctness to effect, that the ministry of our national Church, probably the best qualified of any national ministry in the world, has, for the last hundred and sixty years at least, by departing from the truth and simplicity of our ancestors, been condemned to comparative inefficiency? One of our Reformers, himself a Bishop, asks, “should one sermon every day be too much for a godly Bishop

and evangelical preacher?"<sup>1</sup> It is evident that he cannot mean a written sermon; for such a labour, in addition to his ordinary engagements, would exceed the powers of the most able and industrious. It is this habit of exposition doubtless to which he refers.

And as it would benefit the ministry, so secondly, in no small degree would it benefit the people. It

<sup>1</sup> The whole passage, from Bishop Hooper, is so much in point that I subjoin it. "Exercise and diligence bring credit unto religion, whether it be true or false. For it never taketh place nor root in the people without diligence, as it is to be perceived by the acts and gestes done in the time of Jero-boam and Rehoboam, the kings of Israel and Judah.

"What brought the mass and all other idolatry into estimation, but daily preaching and saying thereof, with such laud and praise as every old wife knew what a mass was worth? Fifteen masses in a church daily were not too many for the priests of Baal, and should one sermon every day be too much for a godly Bishop and evangelical preacher? I wonder how it may be too much opened and declared unto the people? If any man say, labour is left and men's business lieth undone by that means, surely it is ungodly spoke: for those that bear the people in hand of such things, know right well that there was neither labour, care, need, necessity, nor any thing else that heretofore would keep them from hearing of mass, though it had been said at four of the clock in the morning. Therefore as far as I can see, people were contented to lose more labour, and spend more time, then to go to the devil, than now to come to God; but my faith is, that both master and servant shall find the advantage they gain thereby at the year's end, though they hear morning sermon and morning prayers every day of the week." *Fathers, &c.* vol. v. pp. 210, 211.

would interest their best sense and their best feelings; it would convince them that religion was something more than the exclusive business of the Sabbath; it would show them that it was the business of every day, the great leading concern of life, which should regulate all its interests, and mingle with all its employments. It would help much, also, to do away distinctions, and names, and parties. By this continuous explanation of Scripture, the whole Bible, in all its doctrines and precepts, in all its faith and practice, would be offered to them: they would not then take a partial view of it, as they must do at present, from having it proposed to them in scraps and detached texts; but Scripture would be seen in its integrity, an integrity which as it is its main perfection, so it is almost impossible to present in one or two sermons, that is, discussions of single texts, as now represented on one day in the week. Party names would cease, and partial views of truth would be corrected as the detached text merged in the self-expository context, and each several portion maintained its appropriate bearing in the consistency of truth: so that sermons would not be so much dry and didactic statements, conveying mere knowledge to the understanding, as experimental expositions of Scripture truth, exhibiting with the words and meaning, the simplicity and spirituality of the sacred page, for the edification as well as the instruction of "the Communion of the Saints." Once interest the heart and you gain the man:

once make him feel the blessedness of a holy communion, and it would be no question whether he would cultivate its privileges. Let the doors of our churches be thrown open daily, and the above desirable mode of worship introduced, and it would be seen, that an interesting worship would, with the blessing of the Spirit, obtain an interested audience; and the privileges of "the Communion of the Saints" being once felt, a due estimate of them would provide the means of maintaining and establishing themselves. The Sacraments would then indeed be justly appreciated, and new Baptisms would daily be hailed with pleasure. But can we wonder, My Dear Friend, at our present low state of Church-communion, when such contracted public means are observed to support it? This "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as" our "manner is," must be corrected, either by resorting to the daily public worship of our ancestors, or by the establishment of more frequent weekly lectures, if we would witness that communion, which must distinguish the latter-day glory of the Church, to which it seems to be an act of Christian duty to "exhort one another, and so much the more as" we "see the day approaching."

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE attending this interpretation of our Baptismal Service, would be—THE GIVING TO EACH SACRAMENT THAT HONOUR WHICH IS ITS DUE.

It is but too evident from the degraded condition to which the public Baptism of Infants is reduced

among us, that this Sacrament is deprived of its just estimation. And it appears to me to be equally evident that as the one Sacrament is unduly depressed, the other is unduly elevated; so that while the one is receiving less than its due, the other is receiving more. In our old churches, by which, I mean those built before the Restoration, the font enjoyed a distinguished station towards the entrance of the church; emblematically intimating, no doubt, the entrance and initiation of the baptised into the Church at the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism. And to this hour, in many of our country churches particularly, the broad and solid block of stone, let deep into the floor, where it has preserved its station for ages, upholding a short and rude column of granite, which supports, as a capital, a heavy mass of the same, presenting a spacious font sufficiently ample to contain the body of a child, according to the option of immersion or affusion granted by our rubric,—has maintained the indisputable rights, and initiatory claims of the Sacrament of Baptism, by maintaining its situation immediately opposite to the principal door of the church. But in many churches, built and repaired since the Restoration, the font has lost this distinguished place at the principal entrance: it has been removed from that conspicuous spot where it challenged observation, and placed out of sight under the gallery, or condemned to yet more hopeless seclusion in some unfrequented part of the edifice. In many churches

in and near the metropolis, this is strikingly the case ; in one of which, as I was lately officiating as Godfather to the child of a friend, I could not but lament the cheerless character of the Service, compared with what it ought to be. There were none present, I think, besides the necessary attendants : the font was placed in a dark corner under the gallery, in a pew close to the vestry : it was only within the church ; and it occurred to me, that Baptismal degradation wanted but two more removes of the font to make the Sacrament itself a complete nullity, or indeed to get rid of its public administration altogether : the first was from the church into the vestry ; the next from the vestry into the lumber room, among the fragments of brooms and hassocks, and all that was discarded and obsolete.<sup>1</sup> And indeed, My Dear Friend,

<sup>1</sup> It is still more singular, that, in some churches of our modern day, the font should have been placed *within* the Communion rail ; thus, so far as location and outward circumstances may affect us, confounding the two Sacraments with each other, and destroying the emblematic propriety of the ancient and appropriate location of the font. *That*, in its antient place immediately opposite the chief door of entrance, denoting the acceptance of the child into the Church at Baptism ; and the Communion table placed either before the desk, or at the east end of the edifice, denoting that the child must pass through the intermediate degrees of spiritual instruction and discipline as our Church requires, “may learn the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul’s



unless the Sacrament of Baptism be restored to its honours,—an event, which nothing, as it appears to me, but the practical assertion of the above interpretation can, humanly speaking, effect,—what but the mere civil requisitions of a Christian name and a Baptismal register, can prevent it from utter extinction as a public Sacrament of the Church? The real advantages of Baptism seem to be so indistinctly understood, that the mere observance of the ceremony can hardly be expected to preserve it from oblivion. Cheaply as its spiritual blessings are estimated, divest it but of its civil distinctions, and our Papal regard for a ceremony is scarcely so intense, as to encourage the expectation, that the ceremony itself would long survive the invasion of indifference, and negligence, and desuetude, and unbelief to reduce it as a public act to utter annihilation.

It is not a little observable that this Sacrament has been losing its honours, as its fellow Sacrament has been obtaining an excessive regard. The Sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, is known in our church by its distinctive title, “The Communion.” And it has received this title doubtless, as affording the richest act of communion that the saints can hold either with their Saviour or with each other. The more lively apprehensions they entertain of the suffer-

health,” before he arrives at the confirmative Sacrament of the Communion of the body and blood of Christ.

ings and sacrifice of their Redeemer, the more is their love increased both towards him and all who are his. As this Sacrament then shows forth in so lively a manner the "death" of Christ "till he come;" (1 Cor. xi. 26.) "if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies," (Phil. ii. 1.) if any holy sympathy, if any real "Communion of the Saints," this Sacrament must form the grand attractive medium of holy joy, and spiritual intercourse. Where then can the table which contains the elements of this holy communion stand with greater propriety than in the centre of the Congregation in the body of the church? As the font standing at the entrance of the church is the intelligible emblem of initiation into the communion, so the table of consecrated elements exhibiting the common centre of all spiritual communion, Christ crucified, would stand with emblematical propriety in the midst of the Congregation. This seems to have been its position in the ancient Church;<sup>1</sup> and from the period of the Reformation, to that when it was removed to its present situation at the east of the edifice, it seems to have maintained the same in our Church. I am aware, my Dear Friend, that the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gilly, in his interesting account of the Vaudois Church, says of the church of La Torre; "I did not observe any division to answer the description of a chancel: the communion table stands directly in front of the pulpit, and the pulpit is placed near the centre of the church," p. 107.

position of a font or a communion table may appear to be attended with very trivial effects, so trivial indeed as to be undeserving of notice: but he knows little of our common nature, who does not see that sentiments are often shaped by external things; and that while abstractedly considered, the location of a font or a table may signify nothing, yet that relatively considered it signifies much. For as the removal of the font from the entrance of the church has deprived the initiatory Sacrament of its publicity, and thereby of its meaning and import; so the undue elevation of the table of communion from the centre of the Congregation to a remote and isolated spot, has, in the minds of many, really altered the character of the Sacrament of "The communion," and elevated it into an "altar," to be venerated, not as the familiar emblem of Gospel communion, where "the king sits at his table" (Song of Sol. i. 12.) and the "spikenard" of holy graces diffuses itself from and over the whole blessed company that encircle it; but rather as an altar attended by an unintelligible presence of deity,<sup>1</sup> inspiring distance and terror into an awe-struck devotee. The mischief is practical; the complexion of the Sacrament is altered to common apprehension: for the Spirit of adoption manifesting itself in filial confidence, and peace, and love, which is the

<sup>1</sup> See the modern renewal of this doctrine adverted to in the PREFACE to this volume.

peculiar character of the Gospel, is exchanged for the hesitation, and reserve, and distrust of the Law. In "The Communion," perfect love casteth out "fear;" in the Sacrament of "the altar," the spirit of bondage generates "fear." I am not aware that in any part of our Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies, "the altar" as synonymous with "The communion" once occurs. From the Communion Service itself it seems to be guardedly excluded; it is there called "the holy table," and in the rubric "the Lord's table," and the elements upon it are "creatures of bread and wine:" it knows no other sacrifice, than that of the Eucharist, "our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," founded on the sacrifice of Christ once made on the altar of the "cross,—who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," and the grateful sacrifice of ourselves for the same. The "Companion" appointed to lead us "to the Altar" savours strongly of the rigour and severity of the Law: and "The New Week's Preparation" to be observed before the attendance on "the altar," implies a state of soul which is rather an exception to the walk of a child of adoption, than that habitual grace, and continual holiness of spirit which he is desirous to cultivate, so as to be ready for prayer, or praise, or Sacraments, or means, every hour of his life. The practical difference between "The Communion" and "The

altar" is wide indeed; it is just the difference between the Law and the Gospel. In the one we see the coldness of alienation, in the other, the confidence of affinity; in the one, we are "strangers and foreigners" approaching with the apprehension of distrust; in the other, we enjoy the familiarity of the child assured of our Father's "favour and goodness towards us." I offer these remarks on the almost superstitious observance with which the one Sacrament is often unduly regarded, not with any view of innovation, but to illustrate the indifference and neglect with which the other is unjustly disregarded. As the table has approached the one end of the church, the font seems to have approached the other; and the undue elevation of the one has been accompanied with the undue degradation of the other. But let the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service prevail, and the font would resume its station of initiatory publicity; and, with it, the Sacrament of Baptism be admitted to the honours which it justly claims: with the blessing of God, the reception of the Child into the Church would become a Congregational act, and all might sympathise in a rite which was presented to the eye of all.

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE necessarily resulting from the practical admission of the above interpretation would be—THE REFORMATION OF OUR ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

A renewed state of discipline must necessarily spring from a well-understood and well-experi-

enced "Communion of the Saints:" and this would be the principle of it. "Personal communion would be the measure of ministerial responsibility." I have often admired the beautiful theory of our discipline, and have perhaps as often deplored the failure of it in practice. I cannot conceive any arrangement more perfect than the division of the whole land into Parishes, each under a resident Minister; a given number of these Ministers forming a deanery presided over by a Rural Dean; the Rural Dean responsible to the Archdeacon: the Arch-deacon accountable to the Bishop of the diocese; and the Bishop to the Arch-bishop of the province. Here is a theory of order beautiful and complete; combining the whole land in one harmonious system of ecclesiastical polity. But it is evident that beautiful as the theory is, without the constant application of a principle which shall preserve the limits of each department, and which shall provide for the needful accommodation of the system to the growing necessities of the population, such a polity may retain the name of order, without possessing that efficient reality in which genuine order consists. And the practical defect of this principle, as I apprehend, amply accounts for the pastoral provision of the country being so disproportionate to the spiritual wants of the people at this day. For had there been such a self-renewing principle applied, ecclesiastical ministrations would have arisen as the population of the country was in-



creasing. Now this principle our Church possesses in the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service; and I cannot but think, that it is for want of applying that interpretation in practice, that our present ecclesiastical provision is so altogether inadequate to the demands of the people. For once regard our Church as a "Communion of Saints," and the principle establishes itself, that "personal communion must be the measure of ministerial responsibility." Admit the validity of this principle, and no man will be required to accept a charge, the extent of which exceeds the utmost effort of human industry and ability: and when the charge does exceed that ability, each particular instance of that excess, will call the principle into action to meet the occasion.

Let us apply this principle then to our Parishes. Say, that, when a Minister is first placed over a parish, it consists of a thousand persons, a number with which he may hold personal communion; that it is his object to know every individual of his flock, and that by public ministrations and pastoral visits, he has a competent acquaintance with his people. Say, that the population in course of time amounts to two thousand; a number, with which no one man, with the unceasing devotion of all his energies to the pastoral work, could hope to hold personal communion in any satisfactory manner, without a well-arranged and active auxiliary system of church-wardens, sidesmen, and over-

seers, who would not only attend to the temporal wants of the people, but the spiritual also. With such an auxiliary system perhaps such a number at the utmost might be committed to one Minister. When this population, by continuing to increase, exceeded the ability of the pastor to hold personal communion with each individual, and that excess amounted to a given number, or the health of the Incumbent was insufficient for his charge, a Curate might then be appointed. And when that excess amounted to a population of one thousand, an independent pastoral charge might then take place, the Parish be divided, and a second Minister appointed. Admit but the above principle of the necessity of "personal communion in pastoral charge," and Ministerial agency would increase as the spiritual wants of the people increased. It is clear, that, as the personal communion of the Minister is felt, his character as a Minister is felt and acknowledged and maintained; but when this ceases, sympathy ceases; and where there is no sympathy there is no interest. A Church, the blessings of which are not felt, can be but little prized; and hence, I apprehend, the prevailing indifference of so large a portion of our population to the Established Church. Nor does it appear to me that any act of legislation, or any effort of human prudence, can restore our Church to the place which she should hold in the affections of the people, till the above principle is practically carried into effect. Assuredly the division

of a Parish amounting in population to sixty or forty thousands into four is but a faint approach to effectual amelioration: and if the mother Church should in any case retain the right of Baptism, the very seed of pastoral and Congregational communion being wanting, such communion cannot reasonably be expected. The most certain mode of increasing the indifference of the people to the Establishment is to crush that communion in its principle, and to do away one of the most winning and affecting modes of connecting the Minister with his people. And must not the necessary consequence of such a system be the rapid diminution of popular respect for this Sacrament, when we allow for the ignorance and lukewarmness and infidelity of so large a population, which can never be expected to encounter the distance and the difficulties of bringing the child to the church? A field, the size of which exceeds the ability of the cultivator, must be partially barren. And as the means of cultivation diminish, the barrenness must proportionably increase. To preserve a Church from decline, it is necessary to have a principle in action which with a growing community shall provide a growing communion. Such a principle, with the blessing of the Spirit upon it, is, as I apprehend, provided by our Church in the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service. Adopt it, and you set an engine in motion which on the ground of the divine promise, shall renovate human society, and remedy the very

defects of which we are at this moment complaining.

If it should be asked, from whence is the support of so large a supply of Ministers to be derived? I reply, that, let but this personal communion be indeed a spiritual communion between the Minister and his people, and it might be hoped that a respectable support would not be wanting: or should that be the case at first, a part might be supplied by the State, the cheapest as well as the happiest application which it could make of its funds; the improved condition of society under such a system, producing so great a saving of national expenditure in legal process, civil officers, jails, transportation, foreign colonies for transports, and all the outlay in the provision of penal inflictions, that the comparative advantages would fully justify this application of the funds.<sup>1</sup> Let "personal communion be the measure of pastoral charge;" and society would then receive so decided a moral amelioration, that the most inveterate infidel, from the necessity of supporting his own both private and public welfare, could not but support the Establishment. To grudge at upholding such a state of things, would be to grudge at

<sup>1</sup> Let this communion be once felt, and there would be a fund provided and supported by Christian zeal in every deanery or diocese for the supply of competent Curates to the aged, the infirm, or the over-charged Incumbent as occasion might require; as well as for every other want of the Church.

upholding his own comforts. O that statesmen would be but just to their own principles ! for if religion be admitted to be good for a State, it must, as the chief good, be a blessing as it reaches its highest attainable point of perfection : and, as to derive one shilling to the support of the State from any source which demoralizes the principles of the people, is the grossest impolicy, as it is in fact to increase the difficulties we would remove ; so to withhold support from that which has an evident tendency to moralize and improve them, is a policy which can but impoverish, and a saving which must terminate in penury.

It is unnecessary to proceed any further in the illustration of our principle ; let it only operate with respect to our Parishes, and all the superior gradations of our ecclesiastical order would receive its vivifying influence. Each deanery would then feel the influence of its Rural Dean,<sup>1</sup> and be mea-

<sup>1</sup> Should the day of the above desirable state of communion ever arrive, the office of Rural Dean would be found one of the most efficient links in the polity of our Church. Bishop Brownrigg in his answer to Baxter [Life and Times. p. 175.] on church government says, “ This proposal looks like our Rural Deaneries, or Choriepiscopal Order, which hath been laid much aside, but for the reducing of it, and to make it profitable, I wish that it may be bounded with fit canons prescribing what they may do, and with intimation from the Bishop and his inspection, and that such a Dean or President may be continued for life, that being a means to breed experience, if he do not deserve a removal.” Bishop Hall expresses himself as follows. “ Instead of their presbyteries [those

sured by his ability to sustain that influence ; the Arch-deacon would reside in the midst of the deaneries over which he presided, to maintain the necessary personal communion ; the Bishop's diocese would then be limited by the number of Clergy with whom he could hold personal intercourse, and the Archbishop with his diocesan character would fill the tribunal of appeal, and the King be "in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, supreme."

We may further remark, that this principle when once permitted to operate, would not only be the means of supplying a Minister to every growing community, but that it would be attended with the further advantage of supplying places of

of the Church of Scotland] consisting of several pastors, we have our number and combination of Ministers, in the divisions of our several Deaneries ; under which are ranged all the Ministers within that circuit ; over whom the Rural Dean, as he is called, is every year chosen, by the said Ministers of that division, as their moderator for the year ensuing ; whose office, if it were carefully looked into, and reduced to the original institution, might be of singular use to God's church." See "A modest offer to—the Assembly of Divines met at Westminster."

Since the above was written, a feeble approach has been made in some Dioceses to the above arrangement by the appointment of Rural Deans ; but so long as Arch-deacons are non-resident on their charges, and our Dioceses in extent and population exceed the sympathy of the Bishop to influence them, and his power to rule them, we can have but little hope of effectual Pastoral amendment.



worship also for the discharge of his ministrations. It is a question of solemn import with every reflecting man, at this season of our abounding population, what effectual means can be resorted to, to render our supply of churches equal to the demand? Has the Government any well arranged plan for this purpose? Has it taken a survey of the country, ascertained the ecclesiastical wants of our population, and arrived at the decision whether Government can or ought to undertake the supply of those wants or not? Is it prepared to recommend to the Legislature any feasible plan to be effected by the public purse? Are the grants already made, the million of one year, the half million of another, and any other sums the Parliament may have contributed to this purpose, parts of a regular system of supply, or are they only occasional and temporary? Have our ecclesiastical rulers any other mode of relief in contemplation than that of voluntary contributions towards the enlargement of churches and the provision of additional seats? If there be no *system* of relief, it is in vain to expect relief: and if there be, and the progress of it, which we have already witnessed, is to be considered as a fair sample of its operation; it is but too evident that, as a measure of supply, it is altogether inadequate to our demands. But indeed, My Dear Friend, I must profess that I entertain no hope that either the efforts of Government or of voluntary Societies are at all equal to this undertaking. We have no reason that I am

aware of to believe, that our churches throughout the land originally rose from the pecuniary aid of our successive Governments, but in the zeal and voluntary exertions of the people. And let the appeal be but now made to the same voluntary energies, those energies being regulated and encouraged by certain known legislative securities and privileges, and should we not wrong the zeal of our present more enlightened population, to doubt, for a moment, that their voluntary exertions would not at least equal those of their Popish ancestors? Let the appeal be made; and call this principle of Baptismal regeneration in virtue of the promise into action; follow it out in persevering practice, and water it with constant prayer; and probably neither would churches be wanting, nor Ministers to officiate in them, nor a considerable support for such Ministers, with little other aid from the State than its countenance and protection. Surely the most devoted supporter of our present line of policy, must be far from sanguine of success, while so many impediments are opposed to the religious zeal of the people in raising churches within the Establishment, and so restrained a liberty is given to the very same zeal in erecting places of worship among those who are without it.<sup>1</sup>

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE flowing from the above interpretation, is that—THIS COMMUNION WOULD BOTH BEGET UNITY AND PRESERVE IT.

<sup>1</sup> See A. in the Appendix.

The Child trained up as a believer in Christ Jesus, practically renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil, enjoying the articles of faith in his life, and walking in the path of the commandments as the "trade" of that life, would feel the reality of his Baptismal privileges. It would be no mere succession of phrases on his lips, but the vital experience of every day, that he was "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The reality of his privileges is the best evidence that he does indeed belong to him, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." He is a child of this family in the domestic circle, in the neighbourhood, and in the Church; and the acknowledged blessedness of his life convinces him, that he enjoys that unity of heart and sentiment and privilege, to interrupt which by any dissent which does not arise from imperious necessity,—a necessity arising from violated principle alone,—is a mischief to be deprecated, as depriving him of the most valuable blessing of life. Let any Christian society once possess these privileges, and unity must be the necessary consequence: the advantages of it would be so evident in the improved happiness of mankind; that dissent from such a communion would be dreaded as high treason against the general interests of the community. The loveliness of such a state of society, would present any approach to disunion as an approach to exclusion from blessings, which each would esteem as his most

desirable happiness. Let the members of the Established Church once exhibit this lovely communion, and *independence* then, would only be another name for exclusion; it would be exemption from blessing, immunity from union, exception from peace: to be independent then, would be to stand aloof from the highest welfare that man could obtain upon earth. The *Methodist* would then encourage no class distinct from that of the Church, where all is tending to produce one great class, one holy assembly of spiritual unity and love. The *Friend* would drop his distinctions of language and dress, and find an irresistible argument for the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism, in the unquestionable blessings which the faithful administration of that Sacrament is seen to produce. And the *Anabaptist* would cease from his “many pretences to scorn at the baptism of children,” and beholding faith actively engaged in applying the promises to the children of believers, the whole education of the child proceeding on this faith, and “the Communion of the saints” supplied and maintained by it, would no longer permit “the Church to hazard so many souls by letting them run on till they come to ripeness of understanding, that so they may be converted and then baptized as infidels heretofore have been.”<sup>1</sup> And as unity must necessarily be the result of so blessed a condition of society, so uniformity would

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, b. v. 64.

as necessarily be the result of unity: essentials being the very bond of unity, circumstantials would soon assume their proper bearing and place. There would first be "*in necessariis unitas*," unity in essentials, as the basis of this communion; next "*in non-necessariis libertas*," discretion in things indifferent; and the heavenly result would be "*in omnibus charitas*," a charitable concession and forbearance in every questionable point. Uniformity would no more be thought of as the effect of legislative enactments, but the use of a ring, or a surplice, or the observance of a posture being left to every man's discretion, charity would direct the use or observance of each, as we could most accommodate ourselves to the taste, the feelings, or the prejudices of each other. What tears did charity shed over the scrupulosity of Hooper, in refusing to wear the episcopal robes, and over the intolerant rigour of Ridley, in threatening him with the Fleet for such refusal! What still more bitter tears did she shed over the unyielding spirit that frustrated the Conference at Hampton Court; and the enlarged pretensions on the one hand, and the contemptuous stiffness on the other, that embittered the Conferences at the Savoy! It is not in discussions on uniformity that unity can arise; but uniformity will arise, without discussion in the establishment of unity. Once produce throughout the land "*the Communion of Saints*," and all forms will sink into their proper estimation and assume their proper place: but once leave them as

things indifferent to the discretion of such a communion, and charity would prevent discussion, peace would suggest the most desirable order, and “all who profess and call themselves Christians,” being “led into the way of truth,” would “hold the faith in **UNITY OF SPIRIT**,” and consequently “in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.”

Shall I own, My Dear Friend, that my anticipations of that better season of Gospel harmony and love, the establishment of which is “my heart’s desire and prayer to God,” (Rom. x. 1.) are attended with the hope, that at that day dissent will be utterly banished from the Church. Dissent under its best form, and most allowable circumstances, is to be deprecated as the infringement of unity. Christian love may tolerate it, but Christian love cannot approve it. To walk arm in arm with a Christian friend, enjoying in holy converse the consolations of our common faith, till we arrive at a spot where he must turn into a meeting-house, and I into a church, to engage in the most honourable worship of God, which is that of his assembled saints in the great Congregation: in other words, to be separated in that act of Christian communion which most honours God, while it most elevates the soul in prayer and praise, under the richest experience of Church communion, is a state of things which the violated feelings of Christian sympathy cannot look forward to with complacency. The heart must feel a void



and confess its dissatisfaction, while it laments that forbearance is called upon to tolerate, where a more perfect communion anticipated the free enjoyment of undissenting harmony and love. I am most willing to admit, that dissent has not been unattended with advantages. It has been one means of preserving a holy seed among us, and we are greatly indebted to it for the maintenance of our civil and religious liberties; but then it should be equally admitted, and truth I think demands the admission, that these are not advantages necessarily flowing from dissent; but rather expressions of divine mercy and love, the gracious providence of God over-ruling it for the production of good. The evil of disunion is necessary and certain: it is felt as a practical evil in most of our Parishes throughout the land. It separates man from man, and Christian from Christian; it prevents concert, paralyses charitable effort by distracting both our designs and performances, wastes our means, whether personal, pecuniary, or religious, and reduces the order and moral agency of our admirable parochial system to confusion and inefficiency. Could all the decidedly religious in a parish combine with the Minister in religious and charitable effort, in resisting abounding iniquity, and encouraging piety and order, both in public and private; this "Communion of Saints" would, under God, exhibit so real and vital an excellence in Christianity that the blessed result could not but be a general conviction of its excellence.

It is the devil's own maxim, "Divide and conquer:" his grand object is to foster disunion, and to separate that he may destroy. When will our eyes be open to the wide-wasting malignity of this mischief? When will Churchmen aim at the largest comprehension, by correcting a discipline which they confess to be imperfect, by forbearing to insist on the observance of ceremonies which they allow to be indifferent, and by reforming abuses which they admit to be scandalous? And when will Dissenters abate excessive pretensions, give Churchmen credit for honest intentions, and while they admit the doctrinal excellences of our Church in essentials, forbear to magnify with uncharitable triumph her imperfection in circumstantialia? I have no hope that these evils will find any qualification in the means which have been hitherto adopted to correct them. It is not in legislative liberality, or in a renewed conference at Hampton Court, or the Savoy, or in volumes of controversial discussion, that I conceive the remedy will originate; these will either be superseded as unnecessary, or will be the consequence of that better spirit they are undertaken to promote. Once let the Christian community at large but feel the practical blessedness of that "Communion of Saints" which our Church proposes in her Baptismal Service, and in all her consequent formularies, and, the end being obtained, the means which have been hitherto adopted must necessarily cease.

And are we making no approach to this blessed concord? The signs of the times convince me that we are. Are not serious men aiming at the same object? Is not the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom the common aim of every pious Churchman and Dissenter? By whatever name we designate ourselves as Christians, is not every Christian who really honours Christ, alive, each in his respective degree, to the awful condition of perishing man whether near or distant, and exercising himself in his communion to extend the common blessings of salvation to all? Nor have we only one common aim, there is blessed be God one common means, which is I trust the earnest of a growing union in circumstances also. The Bible Society I cannot but hail as the expression of the mass of the wise and good throughout the land, to merge their prejudices and differences, so far as they may, in one grand effort to promote the common cause. There are other Societies doubtless most excellent in design, and most efficient in practice; but these consist either exclusively of Churchmen or Dissenters, or indifferently of both, meeting on some common ground of charity, each of which has its respective importance in promoting union. But it is the Bible Society which is the grand expression of popular sentiment: inasmuch as there are more Churchmen probably conducing to its support that can be found in any Society of Churchmen; and more Dissenters enlisted

in its cause than are enrolled in any Society of Dissenters. Here then is a grand practical advance made towards unity, without once mentioning the term: this blessed end following as an effect, from the moral and holy principles by which the Society is combined. It is in fact a louder voice than that of Parliament, or Convocation, or Conference at Hampton Court or Savoy, or of ardent disputants whether for ceremonies or against them: it is vox populi which is indeed in this instance vox Dei in its most intelligible sense. It is practical unity; the actual attainment of concord without the expressed design; that concord being the necessary consequence of so blessed an object, not its declared intention.<sup>1</sup> And as it is evident that the simplicity of the object proposed is the real ground of this concord, may we not hence learn the wisdom of simplifying every object, to which we expect the general concurrence of mankind. Let us hope that the reign of simplicity is advancing, for as it does

<sup>1</sup> The above was written about twelve years since; and the unmeasured abuse of the Established Church, and the avowed intentions of certain among the Dissenters to overthrow it as a plague and a burthen to the land, may well be supposed to have tried the principle of union on which this Society rests—that the Bible is the word of God, and should be commended to the acceptance of all mankind, in which all may concur. If it is thought by some that the union can be honestly and consistently carried no further; the present flourishing state of the Society seems to prove that it may with success be carried so far.

advance, may we expect the return of peace. But viewing this union in the most favourable light, it is after all but the dawn of unity, the first fruits rather than the crop. It is in the enlarged "Communion of the Saints" in which unity can alone be found: one in Christ their Head, they are firmly united in him; and let the energies of our Church have but full play in producing this communion; let the vigour of our faith be but proportioned to the extent of the promise to the children of believers, and under God we might expect a communion, the blessedness of which, would deprive separation of all its pretexts,—a communion which would exhibit discipline reformed, scandal abated, Christianity illustrated in all its practical suitableness, ignorances pitied, infirmities tolerated, dissent conciliated,—the reign of love, and concord, and peace. Here would be such a community as would utterly annihilate dissent, for dissent would then be separation from the choicest blessings, a voluntary banishment from the happiest condition of society to which man could hope to be admitted on earth.

It is important to remark for our encouragement, that dissent had not ripened into a system of independent congregations, till a century had elapsed from the Reformation of our Church; and that as the original sense of Baptism declined, and Christian communion declined with it, so independence, and consequently disunion

received their establishment. The conduct of the early Puritans, when Baptismal privileges and adherence to "the Communion of the Saints" as contained in our Church, were better understood, as well as that of succeeding Non-conformists, seems to demonstrate that they contemplated no separation from the Church, but on the contrary were desirous of retaining communion with her to the last, had their own views been but tolerated. It required nearly a century of struggle and exclusion, of declining communion and growing separation, to prepare men's minds for the establishment of independence. As the spirit of the Reformation decayed, the spirit of dissent quickened and grew; and as Baptismal communion was on the wane, indifference was strengthened, and alienation confirmed. And where is the remedy? neither in law, nor conference, nor controversy; but in exhibiting in practical efficacy the original design of our Reformers to preserve a constant "Communion of Saints," through the means of the Baptismal covenant to the infants of believers. Let faith be true to the promise; let the loveliness and blessedness of the letter of our Baptismal Service receive a vital being in the loveliness and blessedness of a Baptismal education, and as men become sensible of the blessing, so will they be desirous to obtain it, and jealous of any separation that may either interrupt or destroy it. If we would regain separatists to the Establishment, it can alone be



effected, under God, by giving them practical evidence of the superior blessings into which they will be admitted, and the superior advantages which must attend a united Church. Carry the above interpretation into effect, and you present an irresistible argument to dissent: for you attain a higher object than that which any one denomination of dissent proposes, or indeed than all the denominations combined together propose; for they would each receive applicants into their respective communions, but I am not aware that any one of them purposes as its object, to evangelise the land.

Or is the attainment of union in the Church really hopeless? Is there indeed a moral impossibility that all "the Communion of Saints" shall join in one external communion which is acceptable to all? I cannot believe it. Far as we are at present from so desirable a consummation, I believe its apparent impossibility arises from our education, and prejudices, and selfish narrowness, and even from habitual indisposition rather than from any necessary impediment. The Israelites could not enter into Canaan, not because the passage of Jordan was difficult, or the power of the Canaanites was invincible, but because of unbelief. It was a spiritual defect that rendered the promise vain: they would not believe it, and therefore made no attempt to accomplish it. Alas! has not our unwillingness to unite paralysed all effort to attempt it. But do

we want the richest promises for our encouragement? Have we not the great evangelical song of promise: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace?" (Luke ii. 14.) Shall not "the work of righteousness be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever?" (Isa. xxxii. 17.) and is not the promise again and again repeated, that antipathies shall cease, that the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them?" (Isa. xi. 6.) Are the antipathies of Churchmen and Dissenters more rabid and more irreconcilable than those of wolves, and leopards, and lions? Is their lust to devour each other more fierce than that of the wolf to devour the lamb, the leopard the kid, and the young lion the fatling? Till it can be proved to be such, our recovery to union does not exceed the measure of the promise: and once let the "little child," HUMILITY, "lead" all parties to think more moderately of themselves, and more favourably of their neighbours, and I see no reason why this very day mutual love might not produce mutual concession, and all be harmony and peace.

We reprobate national sin, and we do well; but our mother-sin appears to me to be—DISUNION AMONG THE PEOPLE OF GOD.<sup>1</sup> The "unknown

<sup>1</sup> See Note B. in the Appendix.

and unknowable " horrors of yet encouraged slavery, the waste of corporeal and moral strength among the people by their unrestrained indulgence in spirituous liquors, the general spirit of gaming, and all the mass of corruption and subterfuge, both in Church and State, both in public and in private life, may well beget in us fear, and shame, and remorse ; but alas ! are not all these the consequences of disunion in the Church ? If those to whom the application of the remedy is committed, instead of uniting to apply it, dissipate their powers by contending as to the means of application, doubtless the great, the crying sin rests with them. Let the Church of Christ show to the world that it is superior to the prejudices which divide it ; let us assume the attitude which becomes us as penitents : let there be a " holy order of mourners in Zion ; " let us humble ourselves in the dust before Him whose honour our divisions have injured, and to the advance of whose cause they have opposed the most effectual obstruction. Let us mourn and lament them ; let confession precede prayer, and prayer be poured forth from every contrite soul, that God would heal the bitter waters of our disunion by the salt of his grace, and grant us to go forth as one united company, " conquering and to conquer." Let the whole " land mourn," first, the Establishment, and " every family " of separation " apart," and then every soul, both Churchman and Dissenter, on one

appointed fast of national humiliation. Let Ezra's prayer be that of every believer, "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God.—O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this." (Ezra ix. 6, 15.)

But is a different feeling really prevalent? Are we rather "puffed up," each confident of the superior excellence of his own persuasion, and therefore indisposed to make those concessions which might effect reconciliation and concurrence? Our "glorying is not good." (1 Cor. v. 6.) Or has custom in evil begot indifference to its real character? and has the inveteracy of habit confirmed us in disunion, and rendered all effort at reconciliation hopeless? May the Spirit of God dissipate this delusion from the eyes of his Church; may this solemn conviction of my soul be impressed upon every heart that feels for the honour of Christ, that the great crying sin of the land is the sin of the Church—disunion allowed and gloried in, cherished separation, separation unconfessed, unmourned, unrepented of by the Church at large, separation unconciliated on one hand, and proud of its distinctions on the other. May the spirit of boasting be exchanged for that of mourning, and if "the Communion of the Saints" has ever been regarded as the strength of the Church and the glory of her Head: may

all that tends to weaken that communion, and to tarnish that glory, be regarded as the bane of the Church; and let every heart and hand combine in ardent prayer and persevering effort, to concede, to conciliate, and to unite.<sup>1</sup>

Episcopalian Saunderson, Non-conformist Baxter, and Independent Owen were three cotemporaneous stars in the ecclesiastical firmament, which arose, each in his respective communion, amidst the darkness and confusion of their time. Each was largely accredited by the party he represented, and, from the circumstances of the times, each possessed an influence probably, which no single man at this day, however accredited, can hope to attain. They have left behind them writings of no common value for the perpetual edification of the Church. But valuable as their

<sup>1</sup> The Apostle had never called upon the Church of Corinth for a state of undissenting union had any moral impossibility existed to such condition. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. i. 10.) May this and the two following chapters be the constant subject of meditation to every pious Churchman and Dissenter, and may their holy aspirations ascend to heaven in the following expressions; "We beseech thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord: and grant that all they that do confess thy holy name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity, and godly love."

writings are, they had bequeathed to the Church a far richer legacy, had they combined, under God, in projecting some intelligible mean in which all parties might have concurred, and which, though unable to establish amidst the dissensions of their own times, their wisdom and piety might have commended to the acceptance of a less prejudiced posterity. Blessed, thrice blessed, shall that man be in my esteem, whom God shall honour in uniting his Church. I had rather be the happy instrument of advancing such a cause, though I laid but the smallest stone in the walls of the temple of peace, than enjoy all the fame of all the statesmen, and warriors, and philosophers, and poets, and orators, who, by conferring temporal benefits on their species, have ever attracted the admiration of mankind;—for the union of the Church is the sum of human blessedness: and the highest object at which human wisdom and human charity can aim, is to bring every man to the vital confession, “I am not of Paul, nor of Apollos, nor of Cephas, but of Christ.” It is then that the conquest of the world to its Saviour cannot be far distant; for then the power of the saints will no longer be dissipated in party contentions, but the whole blessed company marshalled under one banner, that of their common Lord, bold in the aggression of benevolence, and safe in the protection of the promise, may go “up on the breadth of the earth,” (Rev. xx. 9.) an irresistible combination



of charity and power ; “ fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” (Song of Sol. vi. 10.)

“ O come hither ” then, “ ye that fear God,” (Psalm lxvi. 16.) every soul to whom the Saviour’s honour is dear, the welfare of the Church, or the salvation of your own soul ; and while you pray for the peace of the Church, advance your own, — “ pray for the peace of Jerusalem ; they shall prosper that love thee.” <sup>1</sup> (Psalm cxxii. 6.)

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE directly resulting from this interpretation of our Baptismal Service, would be—THE IMPROVEMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION. I have dropped some hints on this subject before, but its matchless importance demands a specific mention in this enumeration of Baptismal advantages.

And what a provision is here made for a spiritual education, while the Child is considered as “ the child of God ! ” Let all his instruction have a reference to train him up in this character, and I think it is plain that our present mode of education must be almost reversed, if the forma-

<sup>1</sup> See Note C. in the Appendix.

I see no reason why, one soul, who really honours Christ, should absent himself from this blessed company ; the Anabaptist may unite himself in common with every real believer. It is related of Mr. Tombs, one of the most distinguished supporters of this persuasion in the seventeenth century, that he communicated with the Church at Salisbury to the end of his days.

tion of a child as "the child of God" is to be proposed as the object of our attainment.

What is the object of Christian education? It is to prepare the soul and body of man for earth and for heaven. It is to infuse into the soul as a principle, and into the body as a habit, that "godliness" which "with contentment is" the truest "gain," (1 Tim. vi. 6.) the surest happiness, the most choice condition of human being, "having promise of the life that now is," as well as "of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) The soul's health" then is its great and ultimate object. Now there is one book which reveals the will of God on this subject. It is by the general consent of Christians clearly and confessedly a revelation from God, teaching us to secure the everlasting interest of our souls. Should not this Book, this Bible, be the grand subject of human regard? Should it not be in every heart and every mouth throughout the land, both of man and child, in every chamber and parlour, in every kitchen and cottage, in every palace and mansion, at every table, in every company, public and private, as the general charter of happiness temporal and spiritual, the rightful title to salvation of every being that calls himself man, and that has a soul to be saved? Should it not be translated into every language for the general instruction of mankind? And while every nation hears in its own tongue "the wonderful works of God," (Acts ii. 11.) should not the learning of every Christian land consist of the acquirement of

those languages, in which the Holy Spirit pleased originally to express the terms of this charter? Should not those languages be taught in seminaries and schools and colleges, in which the middle and superior ranks are educated, as that which claims the first attention of childhood, after the acquirement of its own native tongue? Happily, the language of one portion of this Book was the vehicle of polite literature, and the common expression of the intercourse of civilized life, about the time when it was written: and we owe it to the wise disposal of the providence of God, that those productions of the human mind, which the taste of mankind has agreed to consider as most eminent exhibitions of cultivated fancy, of interesting history, of human prudence, or of just and liberal sentiment, have adopted this language of full and copious expression. There can be no doubt, that, as God in his providence, called out the family of Abraham, and selected the nation of the Jews from the people of the earth as the depositories of his truth, the channel of his promises, and as the people in whose speech he would express his "lively oracles" under the Law, so that he equally raised up the states of Greece to literary and political eminence, distinguished their speech with rich and comprehensive expression, gave it celebrity and acceptance with the nations, and adapted it as the vehicle of his general proclamation of mercy under the Gospel. It is admitted that the study of the Greek language is general in

the education of those who are considered as well-educated among us ; but, may we judge from the general indifference which is shown to the Hebrew portion of Revelation, must it not be equally admitted that our indifference to the Greek portion of it would be the same, did it afford no other charms than that it is the language of Revelation ? Its poets, its orators, its philosophers, and its statesmen form the real charm ; for can we hope that of the thousands who are trained to Greek literature the mass have ever studied the Greek volume of Revelation at all ?<sup>1</sup> Assuredly the attention of the student is not stimulated by the reflection, that he is about to acquire the language, which it pleased God to distinguish as the conveyance of the Gospel of salvation to his soul. The cultivation of the Greek language among us, as to its bearing on the sacred volume, seems to be rather incidental and secondary, than direct and primary. Now I apprehend that this must wholly be reversed ; and that both Hebrew and Greek must have the decided preference in a Christian education after our native tongue, *because* they are the languages of Revelation, and let Latin as the language of translation, as well as that of a great part of the Primitive Church, succeed. If Hebrew can be approached by an Englishman without the aid

<sup>1</sup> It is a shrewd touch of the pencil in Law's masterly portrait of Classicus ;—"The two Testaments would not have had so much as a place amongst his books, but that they are both to be had in Greek." "Serious Call."—Chap. xiv.

of any intermediate language, why should not the Greek admit of the same direct access? and why is the Greek to be regarded as a distant province, like Galilee beyond Samaria, accessible only through the intervention of the Latin? It seems almost necessary to the comprehensive acquirement of language that we should be familiarised to it from our early years; and the method of imparting it by speech<sup>1</sup> rather than by grammars and dictionaries, (or at least using them as subsidiaries) a method long since recommended by Locke, if added to the powerful principle, that we were acquiring language to promote the salvation of our souls, would give both facility and pleasure to the acquisition. Let the Bible then be in education as it is represented on the monument of Cowper: let it stand upright in the midst, and all human effort, like his book supporting the Bible, uphold and maintain it. Let it draw all its principles from it, and refer all its usefulness to it. The

<sup>1</sup> The rule must be posterior to the practice, and the thing analysed must precede the analysis. Homer first wrote an epic poem, before Aristotle analysed the epopœia; but Homer, and not Aristotle, formed Virgil and Milton. Analysis is necessary for critical accuracy; but practice is necessary for ready acquirement. I have heard that the young Jesuits now educating at Rome are taught the Latin language by speech; why should not our children enjoy the same privilege of learning with facility and delight? Surely it would be an act of patriotism, worthy of the first classical scholars in the kingdom, to devote themselves to this mode of communicating the knowledge of the languages.

Bible languages will then be learned for the purpose of illustrating the Bible; and real learning will then consist not in the mere knowledge of Greek poets and historians, but in the application of this knowledge to the attainment of that of a far higher order, even that of immortal truth; from which their ideas are for the most part so grossly abhorrent, to which indeed they commonly serve as a foil, but of which God has chosen their language as the expressive vehicle. The Bible will then be the chief school book: the sum of literary attainment will be its languages; and the sum of classical wisdom will be the spiritually intellectual comprehension of its truths. There will not then be a chapter occasionally read as a task, and the book coldly laid aside, and all recollection of its contents immediately superseded by the study of classical mythology; but all study of arts and sciences as well as that of the classics will have a reference to it; it will be the commanding centre in which all the rays of knowledge converge, and from which they will all be receiving light, and usefulness, and blessing.

The mischievous tendency of mythological learning in corrupting the mind from the simplicity of truth, seems to be an evil very rarely admitted among us. We resemble those who reside in an idolatrous land, where the symbols of idolatry become so familiar, that what was at first disgust, soon fades into indifference, till it sinks into passive infidelity. Mythology has been so much mixed



up with our learning, habits, education, allusions, and conversation, that we do not only express ourselves in its language, but it has usurped a dominion over the whole region of thought. We think in mythology; we even debase Scripture subjects by mythological illustration. Nor is this idolatrous ascendancy apparent in minds of common order alone; it invades the originality and independence of the most commanding intellect among us. May I venture to instance this in the almost superstitious respect paid to "the wisdom of the ancients," by our great master of human science himself. If the recondite sense, which he ascribes to the mythological fables of Greece, was really apprehended by their original authors and their disciples, assuredly neither the people at large, nor even their poets and historians, seem to have received them in this sense. And he who judges from the complexion of their writings which are extant, will be rather induced to conclude, that the system is more indebted to the ingenious speculations of the modern interpreter, than to the wisdom and design of the original inventor. Surely the name of Bacon has given a celebrity to mythology, to which its practice neither by priests, nor poets, nor philosophers, nor even the best and wisest professors of heathen idolatry can justly entitle it.<sup>1</sup> If I admire Milton for the sublimity

<sup>1</sup> Though Lucian and Juvenal laughed outright at the absurdities of Paganism, Homer and Virgil seem to pay its

of his genius, I admire him more for that bold independence, which enabled him to think for himself, and to rise above the bad taste, and mental thralldom of his day. And yet what but even his slavery to the prejudices of a mythological educa-

deities the highest respect in their writings : they are the objects of solemn prayer and adoration, and are evidently introduced to accredit the character of their heroes, and to procure them veneration. Nor does it appear, that Homer intended any disrespect to this mythological machinery, when he could transfer it with so much ease from men to frogs and mice ; as when Minerva is represented as declining to assist either party, on account of the offence they have respectively given her ; the frogs, having so disturbed her night's rest after a hard day's toil, that she rose in the morning with a headach ; and the mice having gnawed holes in her favourite gown, the cost of repairing which exceeded her means.

Nor can the practical idolatry of Socrates be answered, by interpreting his desire with his dying breath, that a cock might be sacrificed to Esculapius, as though it were an ironical condemnation of his country's superstition. The conclusion of the *Phædon* is as follows. " He (Socrates) said, and they were his last words, " Crito, we owe a cock to Esculapius ; discharge the debt therefore, and by no means neglect it." " Your request shall be performed," said Crito, " but consider whether you have no other to make." To this inquiry he made no reply, &c.—" Such, Echeocrates, was the death of our friend, a man, the best in our esteem, with whom we were then acquainted, and eminently the most wise and just."

There is nothing here that looks like a smile ; all is serious and sober, all, that to a heathen mind would befit the solemnity of the occasion : and if such was the idolatrous confidence of the best and wisest among them, what must have been that of the mass ?

tion, has led him too often to give a low and debasing tendency to those exhibitions of Christianity which are among the most admirable efforts of human talent? I will mention one out of many by way of illustration. After describing the fall of Satan under the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, as it proceeded from the lips of the victorious Saviour; the subject suddenly sinks into the ridiculous by the following comparison:—

“As when Earth’s Son Antæus, (to compare  
Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove  
With Jove’s Alcides, &c.”<sup>1</sup>

The bathos, and bad taste, and absurdity of the allusion seem to have been so evident to the Poet himself, that he was fearful of writing it, without an express apology; yet so inveterate was his love of mythology, that his better taste, if not his piety,

<sup>1</sup> “Paradise Regain’d, b. iv. l. 563.”—When Milton speaks from the lips of INCARNATE TRUTH he rises above fashion and prejudice, and gives a just estimate of the productions of heathen philosophers and orators:

#### OF PHILOSOPHERS.

“Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead,  
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,  
And how the world began, and how man fell  
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?”

Book iv. l. 309.

#### OF ORATORS.

“Their orators thou then extoll’st, as those  
The top of eloquence, statists indeed,

must yield to the barbarous prejudice. Our idea of the restless importunity of the author of evil can gain no impression from the most desperate obstinacy of any "Son of Earth;" and assuredly the firm, and mild, and undismayed perseverance in rectitude, of the Author of Redemption can gain no intenseness of elevation from any comparison with Hercules, however esteemed as the model of heathen excellency and virtue. What a farrago of inconsistency must the sixth book of the "Paradise Lost" appear, to a simple mind well-versed in Scripture, but unversed in mythology and romance! Founded on a misapplication of Scripture, human warfare is introduced among the inhabitants of heaven; and the spiritual is levelled with the material world. Amidst the hurling of mountains, and firing of cannon, and jokes and quibbles, where is the heaven or the hell that this simple man reads of in Scripture? He has read of war in heaven, but this he spiritually interprets as war in the kingdom of Christ upon earth; how can he think of war in that heaven, where Jehovah dwells in all his perfections, and where the violation of one of these perfections consigns Satan, by one

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And lovers of their country, as may seem ;  
But herein to our prophets far beneath,  
As men divinely taught, and better teaching  
The solid rules of civil government  
In their majestic unaffected stile,  
Than all th' oratory of Greece and Rome."

Book iv. l. 353.

word, and all his rebellious host, to “the blackness of darkness for ever?” (Jude 13.) Surely nothing but our blind admiration of mythology, and its sister romance, could induce us, as Christians, to consider this jumble of incongruities, this confusion of “all monstrous, all prodigious things,” wild and impracticable as the Poet’s own chaos, as consistent with just taste, and its inseparable companion, sound sense, and Christian simplicity.<sup>1</sup> The classical literature of Christian England has legitimated these Pagan and Gothic absurdities; and they have assumed a moral and intellectual empire over us, the degrading and demoralizing influence of which, is apparent from the most refined admirer of the taste of ancient Greece in its poets, and sculptors, and philosophers, to the less refined beholder, to whose eyes heathen deities and heathen customs are palpably exhibited at our public theatres and *spectacles*. Perhaps the most effectual instrument by which Satan is heathenizing Christendom at this day, is by securing our idolatrous admiration of heathen sentiments, and heathen taste. We are absolute slaves to the exquisite taste of Greece and Rome; and are unconsciously immolating piety at the shrine of refinement. We are in fact practical Papists under the influence of Pagan associations; and we

<sup>1</sup> From this failure of Milton, it is evident, that the highest order of human talent cannot depart from the plain sense of Scripture, without degrading the character of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

seem to want only the machinery of Popery around us, and the transit from Pagan to Popish superstition would be complete.

And now, My Dear Friend, can it be a cause of wonder to any reflecting mind, that pure Christianity is so little apparent in the habits and sentiments of a professedly Christian population, when we are habitually educated in this idolatrous veneration of Pagan writers and Pagan sentiments? It is equally apparent that if England is indeed to be a partaker of genuine Christianity, this Baal of mythological lore must be removed from the throne of its usurpation : and that the learning of Greece and Rome must no longer be regarded as the primary objects of Christian education, but assume that subordinate and secondary place which is its due as the handmaid of revelation, and the assistant of truth. Nor do I see any mode of return to Christian education but that offered in the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service ; which beginning in infancy, having the “ soul’s health ” continually in view, and proceeding in faithful confidence of success, on the warrant of divine promise, builds up a Christian man. And till education proceed on this principle, is there any hope, rational or divine, that Christian graces shall adorn a Christian education, or that the effects of education should be otherwise than as at present,—that “ thistles should grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley ? ” Job xxxi. 40.



Nor let us shut our eyes to the signs of our times on the subject of education. Assuredly our present mode of conducting it, is regarded by many as quite unequal to the intellectual, and by others to the religious demands of the day in which we live. There seem to be two descriptions of *Utilists* among us; by which I mean, those, who propose not the mere acquisition of learning, but the fruitful issue of it in practical usefulness as the object of education. These consist of the foregoing descriptions, mere intellectual and practical political economists, and religious men who consider Christianity as the sum of real utility. Many powerful efforts have been made by the latter, to evangelise the country, by improved publications proceeding on religious principle, addressed to all ages and classes; to which they have laboured to give the largest practical effect by Sunday and other schools, and by adopting the improved modes of education which have distinguished our times. In many of these efforts, the former class, who have but little regard for the principles of any particular school, as Christianity is cheaply considered by them, willingly concur. Their common aim is usefulness. This combined exertion has been felt throughout the community; but more especially among the poor, and those powerful classes of moral agency, so largely dispersed over this country of equal rights and privileges which rank immediately above them. Hence “a mighty mass of intellect” has been stimulated into active ope-

ration ; and, as it appears to me, the improvement has been most felt, where the effort has been most largely directed, among the poor and the classes immediately above them. But here it cannot stop ; and it must have been long evident to every reflecting mind that it could not stop here. The introduction of a more useful education among the superior ranks, has doubtless been long in contemplation ; and since the long-instituted and accredited schools of general learning, have not proceeded in improving their systems, with the rapidity which the moral and intellectual demands of the day seemed to require ; a University in the very heart of our population, is now proposed as the most effectual mode of introducing an improved general education. No man who has watched the progress of mind for the last thirty years, and the unequal exertions of the usual schools of education to keep pace with this progress, will be surprised at this effort of improving knowledge to expand and to establish itself throughout the community. The object of this institution, so far as I can comprehend it, appears to be not only to impart knowledge as knowledge, of whatever kind it may be, but to render such knowledge useful to the common purposes of life. It is not to teach theory only, but theory for the purpose of practice ; it is to make arts useful, and science practical. It proposes, therefore, not merely to store the head with knowledge, but to exercise the faculties to the reproduction of that knowledge to the benefit

of life. It is not more desirous of improving the means of conveying instruction to the mind, than it is desirous of cultivating those powers by which it should re-appear as practical wisdom on the lip and in the hand. With this view, it is said, the common comforts and advantages both of public and private life are to be increased, and that most efficient agent of influence, the power of speech, is to be especially cultivated and improved. And indeed what is it that makes the difference between men in the conduct of human affairs? not so much the existence of more or less information in the head, as the ready facility with which the competent information that a man has, is brought to bear on the business in hand. A ready utterance, is indispensable for a man of influence: and he who possesses it, though but moderately stored with knowledge, will be found more equal to the common business of life, and more influential in his station usually, than the man of far greater stores of knowledge and far higher powers of intellect, whose habits have been more those of study than of utterance. Extemporaneous expression is power:<sup>1</sup> it is power which is immediately felt

<sup>1</sup> It is recorded by the biographer of Themistocles among the many qualifications which facilitated his rise at Athens—"celeriterque quæ opus erant, reperiebat, facilè eadem oratione explicabat." An acute apprehension of what the occasion demands, and a facility of uttering the same in appropriate language, are among the leading qualifications of a useful character. And what spoiled the usefulness of this unprinci-

and acknowledged; and as speech is that ready faculty by which the stores of knowledge are expressed, and made available to the purposes of every day's life; so the marked cultivation of this faculty will form, it is said, one grand object of this new effort of the *Utilists*. And is not this wisdom? It is not the bale laid up in the warehouse, or deposited in the vessel, that is the wealth of the country; but it is the industry which reproduces it, "with its ten thousand wheels," its looms, its engines, its countless hands busied in every diversified manufacture, that constitutes our commercial wealth. So it is not knowledge stored in the brain in unthinking repose, but knowledge reflecting, busy, meditative, knowledge habituated to instant reproduction, talent "occupied," mind traded with, and employed in hourly engagement, issuing in ready utterance, that constitutes the useful man. And when to this great object we add the advantages which must accrue to this new system from the adoption of the improvements in education which modern ingenuity has devised, a very considerable effect must be expected to flow from such a system actively operating in a rich and populous metropolis.

Yet much as we feel disposed to encourage  
pled Athenian? The absence of that principle of holiness—  
Christ crucified—which alone can sanctify talent, and make  
it a blessing to its possessor, his family, his country, and the  
world.

every attempt to cultivate intellect, we cannot forget that it will be a curse or a blessing as moral improvement accompanies it. The keener the edge of the sword, the more severe is the wound it inflicts; its keenness is profitable or not according to the character of the hand that wields it. What Christian then must not pause, in aiding this attempt, when he learns that Christianity is not to be the paramount or even an acknowledged part of this system? I know that it may be said, "Christianity may be learned at home, according to the creed of each particular sect; and the endless divisions among Christians, give us little hope, that education would be left to its unfettered play, were any particular mode of Christian profession adopted." While, as a Christian, I feel, with grief, that our divisions have afforded too much ground for this remark, as a Christian I cannot but feel it an unjust visitation on our infirmities, that the inspired system of yet disproved Revelation should either be excluded from the plan, or that Christ should only be permitted to designate a class, in common with Plato, and Aristotle, and Zeno. Our own defective mode of education, but too amply proves at present, that if Christianity be not paramount, mythology or infidelity must be; and we have gained but little from the experience of the last forty years, if we have not learned, that the pruriency of human talent unsanctified by truth, and the pride of mental expansion unprincipled by revelation, will ever produce

a misery the more intense as it is the more refined; and under the plea of superior wisdom, and an unprescriptive liberality, will more effectually rebarbarise mankind, than all the grossness of ignorance or the infantine weakness of superstition. While then we fully concur in the desire to render education more general and more useful, let us listen to the apprehension which dreads our rendering it more unchristian. And if intellectual *Utilists* are more active in the cultivation of mere talent, let Christian *Utilists* be tenfold more active in sanctifying talent with the principles of truth. Whatever may become of this project (and may God in mercy defeat it, if it tend not to the honour of his Son) we are fairly committed in the race, and I have no doubt as to the issue, for “the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge” (Psalm xli. 7.) and our support.<sup>1</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> The fruits of this system seem to be apparent in the plan recently proposed in the late money vote of the House of Commons, for the general education of all sects and professions, as left to the discretion of four laymen selected from her Majesty's Privy Council. Should any of them prove to be Socinians, Deists, Infidels, or Atheists, (and there is no security that this may not be the case,) a school or congregation of those who profess themselves to be such, may, under present circumstances, meet with encouragement; for what is to prevent the application of a portion of this Public fund to their support, but the discretion of the Commissioners. This seems to be a voluntary descent below Heathenism itself: for all constituted Governments have found the sanction of something like Religion necessary, however



I own that I see no means equal to the achievement of the conquest, but those which our Church presents us in the practical application of the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service. Seminaries, and schools, and the ordinary modes of influencing the public mind, must for years be unequal as means. It is the nursery which must reform the school, and it is Baptismal regeneration, proceeding on the free promise of grace, that must reform the nursery: and since no such reform can take place without the influence of the Spirit on the word, may it be our fervent prayer that the Holy Spirit would inspire the Pulpit with the truth and efficacy of the promise; and that all our people may hear, with unabated urgency, that it is only by believing the promise that they can hope for success,—that “if they will not believe, surely they shall not be established.”

Am I too pressing on this subject of education? Or have I urged the consideration of it with unbecoming frequency or fervency? I know not that absurd or even diabolical the objects of its worship. Was this very *bathos* of ungodliness and impolicy reserved as a most finished instance of the Liberal refinement of the present unprotestantised Constitution of once Christian England? A few more such plunges, and our Church may be left to her own graces and energies, unaided by the State, and under the sole protection of her God. Surely the call upon her is loud and imperative, “Awake, thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and CHRIST SHALL GIVE THEE LIGHT.” Eph. v. 14. Arise and return to the Evangelism of thy best days.

I can overpress the subject. For “tis education forms the common mind,” all over the earth, from the exquisite refinement of the Professor’s chair, to the blood-nurtured and scalp-fed ferocity of the North-American plains. As our children are, such will our adults be : and what rational man can hope for adult Christians from our present nurseries and schools of mythology and romance ? A new object must be proposed, a new principle must be applied, and new means must be brought into action, before the day of Christian education can arise : and such are the clouds of prejudice which obscure the way of improvement, that as nothing but a divine power can induce the minds of men to attempt the change, so nothing but the warrant of a divine promise can encourage the most sanguine to hope for it. This promise we have, together with all the means of effecting it, in our Baptismal privileges as above interpreted ; faith alone is wanting on our part to set the whole gracious machine in motion, and all its blessings shall be ours—“ Lord, help our unbelief.” (Mark ix. 24.)

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE afforded by the above interpretation is, that—IT COMPLETELY VINDICATES THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION FROM ALL THE CHARGES AND MISREPRESENTATIONS WHICH HAVE LONG ENCUMBERED THIS MOST LOVELY AND PRACTICAL DOCTRINE OF OUR CHURCH : a doctrine which she herself states as the source of every spiritual blessing, and as “ full of sweet,

pleasant and unspeakable comfort to godly persons."

Admit only that "in every person born into this world," original sin—the "infection of his nature," "deserveth God's wrath and damnation," and that it is the good pleasure of God "to deliver from curse and damnation" any portion of those thus infected, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation,"—and the conclusion is inevitable; there is an "election of grace." (Rom. xi. 5.)

And is there any doctrine of the Bible fraught with comforts so intelligible, and so suitable as this is to every sinner groaning under "this infection of" his "nature," acknowledging that it "deserves God's wrath and damnation," and that without mercy he is utterly undone? To be saved by mercy—mere mercy, mercy requiring nothing from him but misery,—a condition affording scope and correlative fitness, on which to display its own blessedness, is that which just suits his utterly graceless and godless state: his own emptiness affords him capacity to receive the fulness of God. There is no good thing in him; his nature revolts from God; his heart rebels against his law; his will opposes the divine will; and there is no spiritual health in him: he has nothing in him congenial with God; nothing of similarity that encourages approach. He sees no virtue in himself that is to induce the countenance of God; he is by nature the child of wrath even as others: he is dead in trespasses and sins;" (Eph. ii. 1.) and

if any inducement of divine regard is required in himself, where is it to be found in one who "is of his own nature inclined to evil," and whose "flesh" instead of possessing any kindred dispositions, "lusteth always contrary to the Spirit?" It is to nothing then but the good pleasure of God, to which he can look for salvation; even of that God, who, "rich in mercy," loved him when he was "dead in sins;" (Eph. ii. 4, 5.) who saw no inducement to save him but what he found in the good pleasure of his own will, that will being determined to magnify mercy in the freedom of its choice, irrespective of any thing in the creature, but the misery which could alone qualify him as the recipient of mercy. And that he is called out from a "world lying in wickedness," (1 John v. 19.) is owing to nothing but his being "called with a holy calling," even the effectual operation of the Spirit influencing his soul to "receive the reconciliation," (Rom. v. 17.) and "not according to his works, but according to" God's "own purpose and grace, which was given" him "in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) Thus he is emptied of self. Here is the largest provision for humility; for God has chosen him on account of his own nothingness and vileness, to display in him the riches of his grace; and holy joy, and admiring gratitude, and constraining love, press every faculty of soul and body into the most unre-served and devoted service of Him, by whom he is so richly redeemed, and so gratuitously preserved.

And now, My Dear Friend, what doctrine is so truly lovely, so truly cheering to a heart-broken sinner as this ; to one who comes in faith of the general promise, “ Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out ; ” (John vi. 37.) and who feels that “ the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,” and that “ a broken and a contrite heart ” he “ will not despise ? ” (Psalm li. 17.) It is the self-emptied heart that can alone be the vessel of grace ; mercy uncaused but by the divine goodness, unoriginated but in the divine love, is just adapted to the case of him in whom “ dwelleth no good thing ; ” (Rom. vii. 18.) and that he is the subject of the free choice of his God, animates his love, supports his hope, secures his perseverance, quickens his zeal, invigorates his obedience, and causes him to “ walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” (Col. i. 10.)

And is not this the very mode in which our Church improves this blessed doctrine to the edification and comfort of her people ? It is as the elect of God, that election being manifested in the promise made to the offspring of faithful Parents that the Child is introduced into the Church at Baptism ; he is an elect of God before such introduction, and comes to this Sacrament, as Abraham to Circumcision, as the sign and seal of that faith which he had being yet unbaptised ; he is then declared to be an elect of God, the Church praying that he “ may ever REMAIN in the number of ” his faithful and elect children : ” he is invested with all the privileges of God’s elect ; he is regenerated

by the Holy Spirit, he is received as God's own child by adoption, and he is incorporated into the communion of his holy Church; as such he grows up "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" and the Holy Ghost "sanctifieth" or is sanctifying him in common with "all the elect people of God." And, as I have already shown, from his introduction into the Church at Baptism, to his earthly departure at his burial, he is uniformly and consistently throughout all her formularies, without exception, considered as invested with the privileges of an elect of God. The Church never once foregoes this view of his character: election is the life and soul of all her formularies; the most useful and necessary doctrine upon which all her Christian communion is built; it is the parent of her holy calling, her justification, her adoption, her sanctification, her religious walk, and her final glorification. Deprive the formularies of the Church of England of the rich essence of electing love, and they at once become a dead letter, a body without sense or feeling, a carcase without spirit and without soul.

And does not our Church in this respect follow the footsteps of her venerable Mother, THE WORD OF GOD? What is the doctrine, which, as the soul that animates it, or the very atmosphere that it breathes, runs through and distinguishes the whole word of God from beginning to end, but this doctrine of election? It is



the grand practical principle on which the whole Book founds its usefulness and adaptability to the spiritual wants of our lost race. I know, and I do most sincerely deplore it, for the truth's sake, and for our own sake, for whose salvation this blessed truth is given, that it is the fashion of the present day to deny this statement; and to represent that it is only found occasionally; and that it bears no proportion in the sacred page to other more necessary doctrines. But what says King Edward the Sixth's Catechism of that Holy Church, which was "fore-chosen, predestinated, and appointed out to everlasting life?" The Scholar says, "I will rehearse that in few words shortly, which the Holy Scriptures *set out at large and plentifully*."<sup>1</sup> What is the Holy Church but "God's elect," "which the Holy Scriptures set out at large and plentifully?" And may we not further collect the opinion of our Reformers on this question, when the fullest, the largest, and most elaborate of our doctrinal Articles is on this subject; and when the term "elect" is admitted into many of our formularies, and its spirit is implied in all? Has there not been from the beginning a Holy Church distinguished from, and called out of a sinful world? Did not "the faith of God's elect," (Titus i. 1.) distinguish righteous Abel from murderous Cain? Were there not in the old world "sons of God" and "daughters of

<sup>1</sup> See the whole passage, p. 131.

men?" (Gen. vi. 2.) Did not God "save Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly?" (2 Peter ii. 5.) And what is the call of Abraham, and all God's peculiar mercies to his family, in whom all the nations of the world were to be blessed, but one continued evidence of God's electing love to his people? Was not the Holy Church confined by God to a single family nearly, from generation to generation, for nineteen hundred years, during the whole of which season the nations of the world were ordered in his providence with especial reference to his Church? "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance; when he separated the sons of Adam" into several nations, did he not "set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel?" Was not the "Lord's portion his people, and Jacob the lot of his inheritance," (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9.) so that he was ever among the nations as "a garden inclosed,—a spring shut up, a fountain sealed?" (Song of Sol. iv. 12.) and was not the oath of distinction that God "swore unto Abraham" the constant topic of privilege pleaded by the Church in all her difficulties and trials? and to show that the election was not merely national and regarded temporal promises only, was there not even among these an "Israel of God," (Gal. vi. 16.) and an "Israel after the flesh?" (1 Cor. x. 18.)

The Jewish HISTORY is one continued tissue of electing love and distinguishing mercy.

Jewish SACRED BIOGRAPHY is a succession of the saints of God, marked out for mercy, and assured of his unfailing love.

Jewish PROPHECY is nothing more, than the gradual developement of electing grace to the Church of God. Without election, prophecy is a nullity.

Jewish HAGIOGRAPHY abounds in a sense of electing privileges; they are the very soul of the holy aspirations of "the Sweet Psalmist of Israel." (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.) If he calls "out of the depths" at the beginning of his psalm, at the conclusion of it he arrives at a holy assurance, "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." (Psalm cxxx.) He tells us in his first psalm of the security of the "Blessed" of God; "his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." This sense of privilege pervades the whole book, till it swells into one mighty chorus of praise, in the seven psalms which conclude his rapturous devotions, and in which he celebrates the final triumph of the Church, "Such honour have all his saints." (Psalm cxlix. 9.) In the preceptive parts of the Hagiography, from the nature of the subject, the doctrine is not so apparent; but the Song of Solomon is almost an unceasing illustration of it.

What is it that comforts the PROPHETS under the desolating wickedness of their respective times,

but that God had a chosen people in the midst of abounding infidelity? and while the forgetfulness of this doctrine of election was Elijah's misery in the wilderness in his day, when he said "I, even I only am left;" (1 Kings xix. 10.) Isaiah was comforted by it in his day, declaring that "except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." (Isaiah i. 9.) And what were the "visions of glory" which animated their souls, but, that in God's good time, "a little one" should "become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation," (Isaiah lx. 22.) till all people, kindred, nations, and tongues became the elect people of God?

This same blessed doctrine of distinguishing mercy is the very life's blood of the NEW TESTAMENT also. The genealogy of our Lord contains instances of particular and personal election; and though it is not so conspicuous in the three first Gospels, in the last it meets us with peculiar prominence, from the beginning to the end; so that if the colloquial part of St. John's Gospel could be inserted in any intelligible harmony throughout the three former Gospels, election would appear to form no small portion in our Lord's addresses.

The gathering of the Church in the "ACTS OF THE APOSTLES" abounds both in the spirit and expression of distinguishing grace; and is but one continual exhibition of "the Lord adding to

the Church—such as should be saved.” (Acts ii. 47.).

Throughout the EPISTLES the same doctrine largely prevails; but more especially its sweet and comforting spirit develops itself, in all its richness and peculiar blessedness, in the examples of those tried and God-devoted men, who were inspired by the Holy Ghost to write them; and in their consolation most abundantly to console the Church through all ages. And in that one Epistle<sup>1</sup> which gives a systematic delineation of the doctrines, privileges, and precepts of our faith, electing grace has surely its full proportion of prominence: in the chapter of privileges (Rom. viii.) it enjoys its full share in perfecting the enumeration of blessings, and of the whole Epistle it occupies a complete fifth part even in the letter, besides being the soul and essence which quickens the whole into spiritual meaning, from the first verse, in which the Apostle describes himself as “separated unto the Gospel of God,” to the benediction which closes the epistle.

And what is the REVELATION OF ST. JOHN, but a disclosure of distinguishing mercy to the Church from the time of the Revelation, to that hour, when the encompassed “camp of the saints and the beloved city” are finally and everlastingly delivered, “and the devil that deceived them” is “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul to the Romans.

the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Rev. xx. 9, 10.)

What is the Holy Church from the first to the last saint which shall be gathered in, but the congregation of God's elect—"a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," (1 Peter ii. 9.) whom he has selected to set forth the glory of his grace upon earth, and who, when gathered from the four winds at "that day," shall constitute the glory of the Redeemer's triumph in heaven?

I am well aware, My Dear Friend, that as we are able to apprehend the preciousness of the doctrines of grace, so shall we discover this blessed doctrine throughout the Scriptures. To one person there would be no hint of the existence of this doctrine, in God's selecting the widow woman of Sarepta to "sustain" his prophet; while to another, it might be evident, and he might preach the doctrine of election so plainly from it, as to endanger his life from the intolerance of his exasperated auditors. (Luke iv. 29.) It must ever be thus in this divinely inspired volume: the glorious truths of which are not revealed to reason but to faith; and the discovery of which is not made to learning, or talents, or acquirements, but to a humble spirit and a contrite heart, which are "in the sight of God of great price." (1 Peter iii. 4.)

I am not ignorant of the objections which may



be opposed to this statement, and of that main battery, so much relied on of late, that if I turn my face to the north, my back must necessarily be to the south,—that if I hold election I must hold reprobation also: and I am prepared to be told, even by yourself, that the admission of the former doctrine necessarily implies the admission of the latter. But whatever the reasonings of man may urge on this head, (and he has but a confined view of the question, who does not admit that the difficulties on every side of it are such as utterly to confound the reason of the most acute) or whatever private opinion I may hold, I am happily preserved by the wisdom of our Church, from the necessity of making any declaration on the subject. The Church requires of me, in no place that I am aware of, any such declaration. She mentions indeed more than once in her Homilies “the elect and reprobate,” but as a Minister of her ordinances, she no where demands my opinion on the doctrine. She does indeed require of me an explicit avowal of my belief in the doctrine of election; for she cannot move a step without it: it is on this that all her blessings are founded from our entrance into her communion to our departure from it: she holds it therefore *explicitly* in the most comprehensive and the most exquisitely finished of her doctrinal Articles, and *implicitly* throughout all her formularies as we have repeatedly seen. She asks of me then a plain declaration of my belief in this doctrine, as a necessary

and indispensable requisite to my admission into her ministry : but while in her fairness and in her justice she demands this ; in her charity, she leaves me at large as to any avowal on the doctrine of reprobation. Here then I take refuge against all such objections under the broad shield of the discretion of our Church. She sees no necessity of asking me for my subscription to the doctrine of reprobation, but she does ask me for an honest approbation of the doctrine of election, and she will not admit me into her ministry on any other terms. I oppose then her wisdom, and her charity, and her sound example, to all that modern Socinianism, and modern ratiocination may urge against my consistency on this head. The wisest perhaps and the most liberal Church in the world, sees no inconsistency in requiring my belief in the doctrine of election, leaving me to the full enjoyment of my own discretion on the subject of reprobation. And this appears to me to be the wisest answer that a Clergyman of our United Church can give, when charged with the apparent inconsistency of holding one of these doctrines without the other. On this ground he is impregnable. As a Churchman then addressing a Churchman, it is enough for me to plead the requisitions of the Church to which we belong ; and as she sees no inconsistency, in requiring an explicit approbation of the doctrine of election from those who subscribe her Articles, but leaves a similar avowal on the doctrine of reprobation to their

discretion, I feel it sufficient to say, "I desire to be a consistent Churchman, and if you charge me with inconsistency, I leave my defence to the tried wisdom, and piety, and charity of our church."

And surely, My Dear Friend, I want not a fair inducement to this confidence, when I see this blessed doctrine exhibited throughout her formularies, both in letter and spirit, in all the beauty and loveliness in which it appears in the Scriptures of salvation. What is there discoverable in this doctrine of election, as applied to a fallen and helpless sinner, but what is animating and encouraging? Let us attempt to do something like justice to this long-neglected and abused "Daughter of Eternity." But who can touch upon this "good pleasure" of Jehovah's "will," this "praise of the glory of his grace," (Ephes. i. 5, 6.) without crying out, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33.) Who can express it without its receiving "a taint from mortal lips, at best impure?" He best honours it, who most enjoys it. It was not given to reason about, but to enjoy: and may I not confidently ask, what is there in this gracious doctrine that does not abound in blessings to apostate man? man "yet the sinner"—"without strength"—"ungodly" (Rom. v. 6.)—the subject of the free choice of his God, that choice exhibited in almost irresistible blessedness in the "Son of his love" (Coloss. i. 13.)—what is there here to daunt, to terrify, or to repel? Is there not on

the contrary all to invite, to encourage, and to exhilarate? Where is the Gospel lovely if it is not so here? Where is Christianity truly blessed if it is not so here? and where is God truly admirable, adorable, and amiable, but as he is here intelligible, suitable, accessible, desirable, and enjoyable? I grant, that, preached as election too commonly is, *didactically*, and as a dry doctrine without feeling and without experience, it is too frequently repulsive; and I lament, that a doctrine so truly honourable to God, and suitable to man, should have been so grossly distorted on the rack of controversy; but look at it as illustrated by our Church, the ground of her communion, the stay of her communion, the consummation of her communion: and what is there in it but the richest consolation and encouragement? Use it as our Church does, for the purpose for which it is revealed, and it is the sweet solace of the believing soul, and the buoyant support of the contrite spirit; taking its rise in an eternal fountain, flowing in a rich stream of abundant mercies through the commotions, the “sea” (Rev. xxi. 1.) of time, and arriving at its full confluence of blessedness in the ocean of eternal glory.

Perhaps you will say, it would be better to omit the mention of election altogether, as it is a subject of which most are impatient, and it may prejudice the candid perusal of your book. My dear Friend, if I was aware of one sentiment or one expression, throughout these pages, unnecessarily

offensive, I can assure you, that my own hand should be the first to erase it; for I am convinced that if I do not display the spirit of the Gospel, as well as its letter, I can hope for no blessing from him, to whose sole glory it is my desire to devote this weak effort to declare his grace. But if I omit election, if I do not bring it forward with a conspicuous prominence, as the very basis on which all practical grace is founded, I do indeed, in my own apprehension, deprive the tree of its root, the building of its corner-stone, and the body of the very soul that quickens it. I cannot, I dare not omit it, till the Church of Christ has another Bible, and the Church of England another Liturgy. In my view, they both consistently and harmoniously derive all their blessings from this doctrine: and had we but faith to train up our children according to our Baptismal Service, in the free promise of a Covenant-God, the doctrine of election would be practically illustrated in all its beauty, usefulness, and glory, to the truest welfare of man, and the highest honour of God.

I cannot but conclude this subject with the rapturous expression of Hooker: "Blessed for ever and ever be that mother's child, whose faith hath made him the child of God." <sup>1</sup>

ANOTHER and most manifest ADVANTAGE of this interpretation of our Baptismal Service, is,

<sup>1</sup> The whole passage applies here with most appropriate force. See the conclusion of his "Learned discourse on the certainty and perpetuity of faith in the Elect."

that—IT HONOURS GOD IN THAT WHICH IS MOST DEAR TO HIM, “THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE.” (Eph. i. 6.)

“No man hath quickened his own soul:” (Psalm xxii. 30.) salvation therefore is from the Lord in its rise, in its progress, and in its end. Preventing grace comes from God, by which grace originates in the soul; co-operating grace is equally from him, by which daily habits of holiness are formed; and crowning grace is from him, by which grace is matured in glory. Man is no mere machine in this matter; but all the faculties of his soul, being born again by the Spirit, are inclined to good, as they were by his natural birth inclined to evil; and they all now make “increase with the increase of God.” (Col. ii. 19.) And as the believer is now “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him,” (Col. iii. 10.) so God has ordained the means of grace, by the efficacy of which that image should be maintained and improved. Now as grace is free in its bestowment, it is equally free in the appointment of means, by which it pleases God to bestow it. No man is entitled to say, why has God connected grace with the cutting of the flesh, as in Circumcision, or with the washing of the body with water, as in Baptism. A Sacrament is “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us,” and “ordained by Christ himself,” as the “means” of imparting his grace, “and a pledge to assure us” that we possess it:



and it is ours, not with Nicodemus to say, "how can these things be?" (John iii. 9.) but to close in with the offer of grace, to accept it as our own on the ground of the promise, to believe the word of him who in mercy has appointed it, and to honour his grace by faith in his word. As our faith improves the means, so shall faith derive the blessing.

Now God has given repeated promises of blessing generally to believers and to their children: and our Lord Jesus Christ has concentrated the force of all previous promises in that promissive invitation, and actual conferring of its blessings, when he said "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God,"—"and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them;" and in the united strength of this promise and performance of the Saviour, our Church encourages the Sponsors, "ye have heard also that the Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his Gospel to grant all these things that ye have prayed for, which promise he for his part will most surely keep and perform." We are required then to act "to the praise of the glory of" the "grace" of God, and to honour his grace by accepting it.

First, we are to honour his promise by believing it. I deem it quite unnecessary, after what has been so repeatedly urged as to the number and reality of the promises to the children of believers,

to adduce any further particulars on this head. I take it for granted, that God has given us these “exceeding great and precious promises :” and he calls upon us to give him credit for his kindness, to be just to his mercy, to confide in his grace, and to improve his love by believing them ; by real faith to apply a real blessing, and to appropriate these rich covenant-mercies, as belonging to ourselves and to our Children to a thousand generations.

Secondly, he calls upon us to honour his grace by observing that Sacrament which he has appointed as the seal and sign of it. If we question, we doubt ; and if we doubt, we dishonour God. Faith only is the instrument of conveying the blessing. It is faith which gives all its energy to the Sacrament, for it is faith which gives all the honour to God, by accepting all the blessing from him. To doubt is to destroy : it is to reduce the Sacrament to a ceremony, and to deprive it of its virtue. Faith gives vital application to every Sacrament ; “Doubt ye not therefore but earnestly believe,” says the Church : she is throughout the Service animating the faith of the whole “Communion of Saints” present, whether more immediately or remotely interested in the baptised. It is the uniform spirit of her service : “honour God, honour his grace, depend on his word, trust his promise, a promise how sweetly carried into effect by our Incarnate God in the days of his flesh : you have the strongest

grounds of faith: give him all your confidence, trust your Child wholly to his grace; believe, believe; accept the sign; take the seal; bear away the pledge; and doubtless yours shall be the blessing."

And what is this but the very soul and spirit of the Gospel? All its blessings are of grace, rich expressions of sovereign kindness and covenant love; and they become our own, exactly as we accept them and apply them by faith to our own individual circumstances and case. An unappropriated blessing is no blessing; a boon unaccepted is no boon; but as we honour grace by accepting it, so does it really become a blessing: for it is the unfailing word of Scripture, "If thou canst believe;" (Mark ix. 23.) "according to your faith be it unto you." (Matt. ix. 29.)

And it is thus, I apprehend, that every believing Parent should receive his child from God: not as "born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:" (John i. 13.) not merely as a child of nature, but a child of promise; not as a child of providence only, but as a child of grace. It is this "godly consideration" of the gift that so enhances its value, and makes "the fruit of the womb a reward." (Psalm cxxvii. 3.) It is not, in the believer's apprehension, a child of immortal destinies only, but it is enfeoffed with an immortal inheritance; it is a child of glory. And when the Christian Parent receives his Child into his

natural arms, and enfolds him in the warmest embraces of his affection as a man ; he receives him also into the still closer embrace, of his spiritual arms ; reposes him on the bosom of his faith ; and enfolds him in all the graces, the love, the joy, the peace, the hope, which warm his heart as a saint of God. And while he blesses God for this new gift in nature, he especially blesses God for this child of promise,—it is a tribute of gratitude due from a gracious heart to “ the praise of the glory of his grace.”

And what is it but “ the glory of his grace ” that God proposes in reforming this sinful world, and renewing it in holiness ? If the *pardon* of sin shall bring glory to grace, the *conquest* of sin, and the renewal of the world in holiness, shall bring glory to grace also. Most assuredly God never intended the Law as the means of converting the world ; this honour was always reserved for his Gospel. The triumph over our rebellion was never designed for the precept, but for the promise. It was never intended that man should hear the precept, and obey it from his own moral power and strength ; for this would be to assign the renewal of the world to man’s power, and would give the glory to man ; but it was intended to give life to the Law in the human soul by the power of the Spirit ; that “ the praise ” might be ascribed “ to the glory of grace.” “ For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through

the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom. iv. 13.) The law never did make any thing perfect, nor was it ever designed to make it so; but the restoration of the perfection of the Law is due to the power of the Gospel: it is grace that restores the Law to its honours by imparting to the human soul the love of the Law, the sense of its holiness, and the desire to attain it: for it is the express provision of the Gospel Covenant, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." (Heb. viii. 10.) The obedience of the renewed man is to be "the obedience of faith," (Rom. xvi. 26.) and not the obedience of his own natural power to a legal rule. For this purpose Christ came into the world: and for this purpose salvation is by promise; that faith, acting upon the promise, might renew the world in holiness, and grace have all the glory of the spiritual restoration of mankind.

It is scarcely necessary to remark how harmoniously the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service suits this design. It is faith acting on the promise. The obedience of the Child is the obedience of faith; and as he grows in grace, faith admires the gradual developement of the promise, and ascribes the imparted holiness of the Law, which it traces with pleasure in the nascent virtues of the Child, simply to that operation of the Spirit which secures the praise of the glory of free grace.

THE NEXT ADVANTAGE, on which we may

remark, suggests itself immediately from the foregoing : That—AS WE HONOUR THE GRACE OF GOD, BY EXPECTING BAPTISMAL BLESSINGS FROM FAITH IN THE PROMISE, SO WE RECTIFY THE GRAND PREVAILING MISTAKE WHICH LEGISLATORS, AND MORALISTS, AND STATESMEN, AND CHRISTIAN DIVINES ALSO, AND GENERALLY THE WISE AND PRUDENT MEN OF THIS WORLD, HAVE LONG COMMITTED AND ARE COMMITTING AT THIS HOUR, TO IMPROVE OUR SPECIES AND TO AMELIORATE MANKIND.

We must have recourse to the foregoing ADVANTAGE for the statement of our position. That it is the design of God to renew the human character, not by the Law but by the Gospel, not by the precept but by the promise, not by a legal rule but by the influence of his Spirit: or in other words, that his design is to honour his Law by means of his Gospel. Immanuel, and not mere man, “shall magnify the law and make it honourable.” (Isa. xlii. 21.)

And if this position be true, as assuredly it is the very pith of the Gospel, then what a mistake have the wise and prudent men of the world been committing, for thousands of years, in endeavouring to make men honest, and to change the human character by the enforcements of mere law !

And yet is not this the case ? Take a survey of human society even in this Christian land, and what is the principle of moral government from the nursery to the Legislature ?



The grand prevailing principle is—*the rule of the Law calling upon the natural powers of man for obedience to its precept.*

To begin with the nursery—what is the first lesson that children are taught? Is it their own impotence or their own power? surely the latter. The Child is addressed simply in the precept; he must do this and he must do that; but he finds that though often told not to give way to this bad temper, or to neglect that duty, that the bad temper is continually returning, and the duty repeatedly neglected. The precept is repeated as the offence is repeated, and the Child, thrown on his own resources alone, feels that sin is constantly gaining the dominion over him. He makes little or no advance in improvement, and the fretted Parent adds correction to the precept, referring the Child still to nothing beyond the strength of his own natural resources; till, too frequently, habitual fretfulness is engendered; reserve supersedes affection; and distance, and alienation follow, which it is perhaps the unavailing effort of the Parent's life to correct, and, alas! too frequently, his bitter portion to lament, to his last hour upon earth.

On the same principle of the precept, the whole life of the Child is conducted merely by a repetition of rules: he must do this, he must not do that: and when the one is neglected, or the other violated, he must undergo the penalty of disobedience, or a promise is exacted from him,

made in his own strength, that he will not be guilty of the same again. In all this, what is there but an appeal to his own power made by a law, the perfection of which is continually convicting him of weakness, while it frets and goads his fallen nature by requiring that, with unceasing importunity, which every day of his life, that fallen nature by its continued failures confesses that it cannot give.

With respect to God, all his duty is to be the effect of the precept. The Child is taught to pray: he must say his prayers morning and evening: he is inattentive, and he is told that he must pay more attention, for he is in the presence of God. He is tired, and begins to yawn; he is told that he would not yawn at play, and perhaps severely chid for this weariness of nature. Here is nothing but the rigour of the precept; no Gospel to encourage him, no persuasion from the promise that he is a child of God, that the eye of a kind and affectionate Father is upon him, pitying his weakness, and inviting him to confess it: encouraging him to ask for the Spirit to correct his infirmities, for that his "heavenly Father" will assuredly "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." (Luke xi. 13.)

So again as to his lesson: the precept demands it as a duty, and consequently all is weariness and toil. He is not taught to ask a blessing upon his endeavours, that his mind may be instructed,

and his faculties cultivated for the glory of God, and that God would give him the necessary industry and attention. And when distraction and idleness too plainly evidence themselves in a neglected lesson, does not the rigour of the law appear in punishment simply, without any attempt at conviction of sin, or any inducement to repentance by a reference to God as the Father of mercies, against whom the offence has been committed? The severity of the precept exacts the duty, and the penalty follows the violation of it.

And what encouragement can the Child, thus legally educated, derive from Christian motives? Where is the blessedness of his Baptismal privileges as “a member of Christ, the Child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven?”

What can he know of the aid of the Spirit in helping his “infirmities,” (Rom. viii. 26.) when a harsh precept is continually exacting that from his weak nature, which it cannot give, and those spiritual motives and supports to which as a child of God he is entitled, are never once brought to bear with practical efficacy in the relief of those very infirmities for which they are specially provided, and which constitute the very essence of the Gospel as a remedy for human helplessness and imperfection?

And can we wonder, My dear Friend, that the hope of families should be disappointed, when children are educated almost exclusively

by the harshness of the Law, rather than by the encouragement of the Gospel? While we neglect God's means and adopt our own, what are we doing, but counteracting God? What wonder then that the failure is so common?

When sent to school alas! the same or rather an aggravated rigour of the precept still pursues the hapless Child of Baptismal privileges neglected and forgotten. Either the rod of the Law is constantly terrifying him to the discharge of duty, or false motives of conduct are applied, which supersede all the blessed, and heavenly, and effectual motives of the Gospel. The fear of shame the terror of degradation, the love of reputation, the dread of a rival, the thirst of reward, or the love of distinction, entirely blot out the desire of instruction, that he may become a capable agent of usefulness in promoting the welfare of man, and an honoured instrument in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom and the glory of God. The Law surrounds him on all sides, with the strictness of its letter, the severity of its exactions, and the unrelenting harshness of its penalties and inflictions: and his wearied and jaded nature, resenting the oppression, is confirmed in self-esteem and self-pretension, and arrogance, and vanity, and presumption; till all those sins become his habit, which he had vowed at his Baptism to renounce. Hence, unless it please God to extricate him in special mercy from the destructive current of a sinful world, and to

pluck him as a "brand out of the fire," (Zech. iii. 11.) he passes through life the assertor of a proud morality, a self-righteous exacter of the precept, a decided enemy to the lively grace of the Gospel; and lost in the same ignorance and error which have cursed the day of his forefathers, and threaten through his mis-principled education,<sup>1</sup> to be the curse of that of his posterity also.

<sup>1</sup> See a very interesting discussion, of the best mode of conducting education, between some of the principal Statesmen of their day, at Secretary Cecil's table at Windsor, as given by Ascham in the opening of his "Schoolmaster." His own opinion was, as the result of long experience; "Love is fitter than feare, gentlenesse better than beating, to bring up a child rightlie in learning." Among many most pertinent remarks he adds, "This will I say, that even the wisest of your great beaters, do as oft punish nature, as they do correcte faultes. Yea, many times, the better nature is sore punished; for, if one, by quickness of witte, take his lesson readily, an other, by hardnesse of witte, taketh it not so spedilie, the first is alwaies commended, the other is commonlie punished; when a wise scholemaster, should rather discretlie consider the right disposition of both their natures, and not so much weigh what either of them is able to do now, as what either of them is likelie to do hereafter. For this I know, not only by reading of bookes in my studie, but also by experience of life abroad in the world, that those which be commonly the wisest, the best learned, and best men also, when they be olde were never commonlie the quickest of witte when they were yonge."

These sentiments are so powerfully instanced in the example of Lady Jane Grey, and are so well expressed by her in

And as men are educated in the rigour of the precept, so the whole cast of their conduct, in all the relations of life, exhibits the consistent impress of the same rigour. The Child in return for the legal treatment of his Parent exacts the same unsparing demand of duty from him; instead of exercising the patience, the forbearance, the self-denial and kindness, the condescension to his infirmities, the meekness of wisdom, mild resignation, and unwearied prayer which are the very expression of a sense of Gospel privileges, and distinguish the intercourse of "the Communion of

her conversation with Ascham, that they are well worthy of record. "One of the greatest benefits that ever God gave me, is, that he sent me so sharpe and severe parentes, and so jintle a scholemaster. For when I am in presence eyther of father or mother; whether I spake, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eate, drink, be merie, or sad, be sowyng, playing, dancing, or doing anie thing else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfitelie as God made the world, or else, I am so sharplie taunted, so cruellie threatened, yea presentlie, sometimes, with pinches, nippes, and bobbes, and other waies, which I will not name for the honour I bear them, so without measure misordered, that I think myself in hell, till time come that I must go to Mr. Elmer; who teacheth me so jintlie, so pleasantlie, with such fair allurementes to learninge, that I thinke all the time nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping, because whatsoever I do else, but learning, is full of grief, trouble, feare, and whole misliking unto me. And thus my book hath been so much my pleasure and bringeth daily to me more pleasure and more, that in respect of it, all other pleasures, in very deede, be but trifles and troubles unto me."



Saints." The same legal harshness of undue expectation and excessive demand, marks the other domestic relations of Husband and Wife and Master and Servant ; it is not the suavity of a Gospel communion, but the severity of a required duty, which characterises the exercise of these relations. So, indeed, throughout the whole social intercourse between neighbour and neighbour, there is a constant resort to the strictness of a legal letter, an unmitigated demand of right, an unconceding assertion of an extreme claim, a quick perception of offence, and as quick an appeal to the precept of ruled law : all which but too evidently proves the harsh principle from which the whole complexion of our manners is taken, even in this professedly Christian land : and that in laying aside the Gospel privileges proposed by our Church in Baptism, instead of exhibiting the graces of a " Communion of Saints " formed by the Spirit, we exhibit little more than a community of natural men, formed on a rigorous precept, that rigour being proportionably qualified as Gospel ordinances are observed, and the spirit of the Gospel prevails among us.

Let us now look into public life in Christian England ; all bears the too evident impress of the grand mistake, the endeavour to alter the character of men by the enforcement of the precept. What a harsh enforcement of law is observable in our prisons ! a man has offended the law of his country, and he must undergo the penalty by

being transferred from his family or occupation, to the restraint of a prison; perhaps his body is fettered, or subjected to the infliction of hard labour, or deprived of its usual sustenance, and his society is among the dissolute and dishonest. And can it really be hoped, that all this variety of legal penalty can be attended with the happy effect of making the dishonest man honest, or the drunkard sober? or is this effect to be wrought by the moral or religious instruction he may receive? If so this instruction would not be occasional, but daily and frequent, and a large portion of the prisoner's time would be devoted to this purpose; but this is not the case; and it is but too evident that if any improvement of character is expected, it is expected from the operation of legal inflictions. And what is the result? just what might be expected, discomfiture and failure. The person once imprisoned, so far from being reformed by the infliction of law, has too frequently lost his character, instead of having recovered it; and either becomes an habitual prisoner for life; or he departs from prison with no better principle than he entered it, and his life remains unimproved. This I believe to be the uniform voice of experience in Newgate, and its kindred establishments of the metropolis. Neither the precept of law, nor the penalties of law, are found to reform the human character. I have been chaplain to a prison for more than one quarter of a century, and can truly say, that the result

of my experience on this head is, that any favourable change of character which I have witnessed in the subjects of my charge, during that season, has arisen, not from the enforcement of Law, but from the mild and winning suavity of the Gospel. Chains and prisons may restrain, but they never can reform. And the result of my experience exactly harmonises with that view of the Gospel which these pages imperfectly pourtray ; that our jurisprudence never can succeed in improving our population, till our prisons of rigorous law, become as to their ultimate object penitentiaries of the conciliating Gospel.

Look next at the Legislature, from which the laws emanate in this Christian land. “ And the Lord God *commanded* the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) This is the form of human law, the common frame of our Acts of Parliament. It is the command of authority : terms are specified, exceptions, if any, are stated, obedience is required, and the penalty is subjoined. And so long as man remains the fallen and sinful being he is, so long must human laws propose their rule and subjoin their penalty. But the question is whether in a Christian community, the spirit of whose rule is “ I will have mercy and not sacrifice ; ” the above mode of preceptive and inflictive legislation, is that which is

adapted to make or to preserve a people moral or religious? The obedience of the Gospel is not an obedience arising from the demand of any precept of God or man on the natural powers of the human heart, for such it cannot give; but it is "the obedience of faith," an obedience wrought in the heart by the Spirit of that God who worketh in every believer, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure:" (Phil. ii. 13.) and the obedience paid by this man to human laws, springs from a spiritual motive, his faith calling upon him to be "subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." (1 Peter ii. 13.) Might we not expect then from a Christian Legislature a code of laws founded on Gospel motives, the suavity of which should temper the severity of the precept, and while it aimed to suppress evil in every shape, never imposed the penalty but as the resort of imperious necessity? Would not the leading character of legislative enactment be, to induce and to encourage to good, to establish means of grace throughout the land, to provide churches and Ministers according to the number and wants of the people, to institute schools, to arrange the most spiritual and the most useful mode of education; and, generally, to call all those great and efficacious motives into action, from which emanates that highest order of human character, which is equally a blessing in public and private life—the just man formed on the principles of the Gospel? What then is the real state of the case? Though

the Gospel is the law of the land, and the Bible and the Liturgy and the whole Ecclesiastical Establishment are part and parcel of our legislative provisions ; yet can the spirit of the Gospel be said to be the spirit of our laws ? Is it their great and obvious character, to restrain that they may improve, and to punish that they may bring to repentance ; to suspend the functions and privileges of the citizen for a season by the imprisonment of his person, that he may be restored to the due exercise of those functions, and the enjoyment of those privileges, and thus become a blessing to himself, his family, and his country, and an honour to his God ? Human life is cheap among us, there being, it is said, more than one hundred and fifty offences attended with the penalty of death. Human comfort is cheap among us, from the multiplicity of statutes which enjoin fine, imprisonment, personal punishment, the hulks, and transportation to a distant land ; and which admit no opportunity of repentance, make no allowance for it, offer no encouragement to it, and yet expect to ameliorate the character solely by the infliction of the penalty, so that the offence shall not be repeated.<sup>1</sup> We stimulate the

<sup>1</sup> Most willingly do I admit that the severity of the law is frequently tempered by the merciful prerogative of the Crown, and by the lenity of official discretion ; but this does not affect the character of the law ; that still remains the same. Nor does it appear to me to be possible to relieve our laws from the imputation of a merciless severity, so long as

pruriency of human passions and appetites, by encouraging gaming, by the licensed sale of spirituous liquors ; and we offer a snare to human cupidity by the multiplicity and frequency of oaths. But it is invidious as it is unnecessary for me to “ basket up the family of plagues that waste our vitals,” my object being to show that the *leading character* of our legislative acts is to preserve and improve society not by the operation of Gospel principles, but by the precept and penalty of Law ; a fundamental mistake, inasmuch as we are expecting that from the precept which the precept can never obtain from our fallen nature, and which the renovating and empowering grace of the Gospel can alone produce. Law may and must restrain the hand from the commission of the out-

the present mode of capital punishment is uncommuted for the privation of personal liberty, and so many are annually hurried out of life into an irreversible eternity, who are the least qualified to meet the severity of judgment, and whose confinement in an asylum that was at once punitive and penitentiary, (the former in order to the latter) according to the character of its inmates, might have restored them to society as a blessing, or deprived them for life of the ability to repeat their crime.—A large proportion of those who suffer seem to be from 18 to 30 years of age ; 40 or 50 years of prolonged life shut out from opportunities of crime, is a protracted day of grace, in which many a soul might, with God’s blessing upon the means, be recovered from the error of his way, and be restored to the blessings both of this world and the next.—Since the above was written, some of the above evils have been mitigated by the Legislature ; but the principle remains the same. Sept. 1839.



ward act; it is the Gospel alone that can supply the motive to improve the act, and to direct it to good.

Look next to the Cabinet of the Statesman. And are not the principles of government equally mistaken as the principles of legislation? In a Christian country professing the Bible, the Book of motives, as the storehouse of its principles of government, should we not conclude that this would be the principle of its rule; that—MAN IS AS HIS MOTIVES ARE, OR THAT MOTIVES MAKE THE MAN? To the outward eye indeed, “manners maketh man;” but to the eye of wisdom tracing up effects to causes, “motives make the man;” inasmuch as corrupt fruit uniformly proceeds from a corrupt tree: and “make the tree good,” (Matt. xii. 23.) and you make the fruit good also.

Might we not hope, then, that such a Government would direct its policy simply by the pole-star of principle; and so far from violating it by any territorial acquisition which was not approved by justice—by any commercial advantage unsanctioned by the same—by any appeal to the cupidity of the people, or to the pruriency of their appetites to raise money for purposes of state, that on the contrary it would deem the inviolability of principle so sacred, that no civil necessity could justify the infringement of it? And might we not further hope that this principle would be the very spirit of its rule? That in all political necessities it would not resort to a mere expedient,

as a temporary corrective of evil ; but that it would wisely and patiently consider the cause of the evil, and seek effectually to amend it in its principle. Let us take the case of Ireland for an example. Many of the people have long expressed themselves dissatisfied with their Government ; and this expression has arisen, from century to century, to its most distressing degree in civil commotion. Concessions have been made from time to time, and armies have been sent and renewed ; and the evil is now of so menacing a character, as to induce the solemn consideration, whether concession shall not be carried to its utmost, and all that is demanded be yielded ; while to many it appears, that this concession may prove the admission of principles into the State, which may reduce us again to ignorance and slavery. In such a juncture might not a Christian Cabinet be expected to reason thus ? “ Centuries have elapsed, and one generation has been borne away after another, but the men are the same : if we make concession it does but provoke demand ; if on refusing demand civil commotion ensue, which is quieted by force, the same force must again and again be called into action, when the terror of its former exercise has subsided. It is evident, therefore, that as the men are the same, their principles are the same, and we must correct their principles to correct the men. Force will not avail, let us try what kindness may do : the Law has not effected our purpose, with its precept and its

penalty, let us try what the Gospel may effect." And if the first question, with such a Cabinet, in the case of insurrection or rebellion, was that of *expediency*, "what is to be done at this moment to relieve the pressure of incumbent difficulty?" the second would be a question of *principle*: "does not our security rest on principle alone?" To expect security from ignorance and error is perfectly childish; it is to expect them to belie their nature, and to force the stream back to the fountain. The only security that we can find, under God, is in the truth of our own principles. It is not the precept "to obey," again and again enjoined, and its observance enforced with the penalty of the bayonet, that can avail us, but Christian Ministers, and Christian teachers, to impart those principles of truth, from which an intelligent obedience can alone arise. It is the Gospel of peace that can alone impart the principles of peace. Let the only blood shed in Ireland be that of faithful and laborious Protestant Ministers, whose kindness and patience provoke the intolerance of ignorance and error; and that blood would be the seed of a moral renovation, and therefore of a civil tranquillity among her people, which no concession, however unqualified, no precept or penalty of legal rule, however extreme, can ever produce. In a word, it is the Gospel alone which supplies the principles of truth, and as men receive that truth, so must moral and civil obedience prevail.

But so long as the precept and penalty of mere law are resorted to, to obtain a willing obedience to that law, it is evident that discomfiture must be the result ; both God and experience are against it : for it is attempting that change of character by the Law, which God has ordained shall only be effected by the Gospel.

A portion of the same great practical mistake, is that idolatrous admiration of talent which ascribes to human wisdom and human prudence that effect, which the principles of Gospel truth under the influence of the Spirit can alone produce. It is no human prudence that can convert Hindoos or Mohammedans to Christianity, or make the advocates of Roman Infallibility the willing subjects of a Protestant Government. All the prudence and all the talent on earth, combined in one council cannot effect this : whereas if a Sunday School child, fresh from the simple instruction of Christian truth, and taught that the knowledge of a Saviour was the one grand remedy appointed by God for the correction of human error, were permitted with the reigns of government in his hands, to apply this simple principle, till passing through the obstructions of prejudice and ignorance, the opposition of office, and the delays of so novel a practice, it issued in the appointment of holy Ministers and teachers in the churches and schools, and holy functionaries in office ; he would do more to extricate us from our present difficulty, than all the human wisdom, and human prudence that

have been applied to the relief of unhappy Ireland, from the times of Walsingham and Burleigh to the present hour. The world stands not so much in need of talent as of honesty; it needs not policy but principle, or rather the conviction that principle is the best policy. It is not mere official ability and worldly wisdom, to which God has awarded the honour of producing the most accomplished state of society; it is to the power of his principle of truth,—CHRIST CRUCIFIED—and to the might of his Spirit operating on that principle, to which the renovation of the world is due. And all the talent of man, with all its policy and all its power, all its legal rule and legal penalty, backed by its loudest tone of precept and warning, “Do, do, do, or be punished,” shall sink into utter nothingness, before the one plain word “Believe,” the appointed renovator of human society, which shall eventually transform every community of mere men into a communion of faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

And this is the only mode by which all political commotions can be effectually appeased, which arise from the discordant sentiments of mankind: error must be superseded by truth.

Confidence in human wisdom and human power has been the devil’s grand delusion, by which he has fostered the pride of man, and deceived the nations from the beginning. For six thousand years nearly, he has flattered the pride and independence of man, persuading him that the counsels

of human Cabinets, and the laws to enforce those counsels, can rule the moral world. How they have been able to do it, let accumulated penalties, and increasing legislative severity, and harsher legal inflictions, and war and carnage and misery declare. If another state of things is at hand, it is evident, both from Scripture and experience, that human Legislatures and Cabinets must alter the principle of their rule; that Law must yield to principle, the precept to the promise, human power to the power of the Spirit: and that the *first* qualification for office, must not be TALENT but HOLINESS.

The sum of human wisdom is right principle; and the sum of human prudence is the due application of that principle to the production of its proposed end.

But we must yet ascend another step in this interesting subject, and rise from the Cabinet to the Pulpit: and here it is but too evident that if the accredited moral instructors of mankind, throughout Christendom, have taught for doctrines these commandments of men, instead of the grace, and spiritual power of the Gospel, and have been seeking to make men moral by preaching the requisitions of the Law rather than the influence of the Gospel, the taught can only present the character of the morality impressed on them by their teachers. As the Pulpit is, such will be the Cabinet, the Legislature, the Prison, the Parlour, and the Nursery. The complexion of its doc-



trines will give the complexion to every rank, condition, and relation of social life. And has not the prevailing divinity of the Pulpit throughout Christendom for eighteen hundred years nearly, been the prevailing divinity of the natural heart of man, under the sanction of a Christian name? Has it not with the name of Christ on the lips of the preacher, been an attempt to bring men to the obedience of Law by enforcing the precept of Law? Has it not been the call of the preacher on the natural heart, to render obedience to the precept, when the Christian motives and principles which could alone enable to that obedience, have been so wholly thrown into shade, as to be virtually suppressed? And has the drunkard been urged to sobriety, and the dishonest to "steal no more" from human motives merely, as the apprehension of consequences, the fear of shame, the loss of reputation and the like! Then what is this but the divinity of mere nature, the divinity of Plato and Epictetus and Seneca; not the divinity of CHRIST CRUCIFIED, that "wisdom of God," which "destroys the wisdom of the wise," and "that power of God," which "brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent?" (1 Cor. i. 19.) And has not this attempt been made rather in human strength than in the power of the Spirit? Has not a confidence been reposed in "wisdom of words," in "excellency of speech and of knowledge," in human eloquence, in the

suasion<sup>1</sup> of reason, in powerful statement, in fine displays of imagination, in affectionate earnestness, in a word, in some modification of human ability, rather than in the aid of the Spirit, and “the foolishness” of that “preaching” of the cross of Christ, with all its loveliness and all its encouragements, which “saves them that believe?”

A very brief view of the Church from the ascension of its Head into glory to the present hour, will give a fearful representation of the preaching of grace contracted and suppressed, and the preaching of Law dominant and general. In the first century, called the Apostolic age, what resistance did our Lord meet with in his own ministry from the legal principles of Pharisees and formalists! And it seems to have required all the power of Apostolic authority, and wisdom, and grace in Paul especially, as well as in the other inspired messengers of the pure Gospel, to maintain the integrity of grace against the legal Judaizing spirit of their day. It was the invasion of this natural temper of the human heart, that gave birth to the first Council held at Jerusalem, and to the full and powerful condemnation of this mischief, in more than one epistle addressed to some of the most flourishing of the Churches. When these original lights were removed from this lower scene of their active exertions, how quickly did

<sup>1</sup> Πειθοίς translated “enticing,” the margin reads “persuasive.” 1 Cor. ii. 4.

this legal spirit operate to obscure the lustre of grace ! The next age was distinguished by the Gnostic depravation of the person of Christ, and with this, as all grace was obscured, so legal motives and legal means of salvation soon assumed the dominion. The reign of Novatian harshness succeeded in the third century ; the intolerance of legal severity having superseded the conciliating benignity of grace ; and the three following centuries take their name, from the several modes of yet further depraving the person of the Saviour, by the successive prevalence of the Arian, Nestorian, and Eutychian heresies, till the preaching of the Law gained a complete supremacy throughout the Church in the opening of the seventh century, when the man of sin received his full establishment in the Episcopal chair of Rome. During the nine following centuries, superstition upheld the reign of legal precept, by her self-imposed penances and mortifications, her monasticism and vows, and the legal ability of one soul, not only to save itself, but to contribute by its supererogatory abundance of merit to the salvation of its neighbour also. Till the sixteenth century arose, we hear of no “ *Sæculum Evangelicum*,” no reign of grace, and then arose the “ *Sæculum Reformatum* ;”<sup>1</sup> that age of Reformation when Christ crucified being again “ lifted up ” (John xii. 32.) drew the eyes of an awakened world to him ; and

<sup>1</sup> I use the enumeration of Christian centuries as given by Cave in his “ *Historia Literaria*.”

that one simple principle of pure grace "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. v. 1.) being again disclosed under the operation of the Spirit, legal perfection in sinful man in all its ten thousand forms fled before it, and free grace for a season made no ineffectual struggle for the spiritual dominion of this Western World.

And yet the extent to which these principles of Reformation actually prevailed in the Pulpit of our own Church, confessedly the most flourishing Church of the Reformation, seems to have been overrated, if we may receive the following evidence of Bishop Jewell in the 14th Homily, written after the accession of Elizabeth to the throne; "But sincere Preachers were, and ever shall be, but a few in respect to the multitude to be taught. For our Saviour Christ saith, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workmen be but few:" which hath been hitherto continually true, and will be to the world's end: and in our time, and here in our country so true, that every shire should scarcely have one good Preacher, if they were divided." And speaking of "Peril of Idolatry," he says, "but a true Preacher to stay this mischief, is in very many places scarcely heard once in a whole year, and somewhere not once in seven years, as is evident to be proved." That "good Preachers" afterwards increased is evident, though it is as evident that they soon began to decline. Elizabeth seems to have lived just long enough for her fame

and her peace. Towards the conclusion of her reign, doctrines, before introduced, began to invade the simplicity of those of the Reformation, and which by gathering strength in the days of her successors, issued in a conflict, which by abusing grace on one hand, and depraving it on the other, terminated in that return of the legal precept to our pulpits, which with the Restoration of Charles the Second to the throne has distinguished the divinity of our Church from his time to that of the Reformation of this present day.

And in this our day, partially reformed, and daily reforming as our English Pulpit is, yet can this day be justly said to be distinguished for attempting the amelioration of mankind by a full, simple, and persevering exhibition of the Gospel of free grace? I have but few opportunities of hearing, but if I may judge from the general character of the printed sermons I have seen, and from the accredited periodical productions conducted by members of our Church, the doctrines of grace are in most instances made to yield to the precept of Law, are so wholly kept out of sight, so partially exhibited, or so fenced and guarded by an excessive caution, that being prohibited the fair exercise of their powers, self-righteousness and self-ability smile at the feeble impression made on their all-dominant sway.

Look then at the state of divinity in the world, as it has been, and yet is. For fourteen centuries, from the first to the sixteenth, the character of

the Christian Pulpit seems to have been that of moral reformation by preaching the precept of Law : during one century, to give it, as it seems to me the largest allowance, the simple Gospel of grace prevailed over one-fourth of the Christian world, if so large a proportion of it ever ranged itself under the Protestant standard : from that time to the beginning of this our present improved state, renovation by the Law was the prevailing doctrine of our pulpits ; and, may we accept the above-stated particulars as just evidences of the prevailing sentiments of this our day, the moral renovation of man by preaching the precept, is the characteristic feature of even our Reformed Pulpit.

How then, My Dear Friend, could it ever be justly expected, that human society should have assumed a more improved condition than it presents to us at this hour ? Over four-fifths of the world, heathen and Mohammedan darkness has never yet felt the cheering light of the Gospel of grace ; and over the remaining fifth, known by a Christian profession, at least three parts seem to be sunk in the legal delusion of Greek and Roman superstition ; and even throughout the Protestant Churches, in the most favourable judgment of charity, can the pure principles of grace, the appointed renovators of fallen man to the image of his God, be said to be the prominent, much less the exclusive means adopted for human improvement. See then the reason that in this nineteenth century of the Christian era and in the fifty-ninth



century of the world, shall we say now hastening to its perfection with quicker pace than heretofore, man has made such feeble advances in regaining the moral image of his God. We have been attempting to effect that by the precept of Law, which God has appointed to be done by the grace of his Gospel. Such appears to me to be the fact; and the conclusion of the Prophet seems to describe our condition with a graphic accuracy. If we had stood in the counsel of God, God would have honoured his own counsel, and the blessed effect had been produced; but as we have deserted his counsel for our own, defeat and discomfiture have been the necessary result. "But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." (Jer. xxiii. 22.) Had the grace of God been preached, the grace of God had surely produced its peculiarly blessed effects.

God never gave the precept of his Law for the purpose of making man holy or of keeping him so. The first expression of his will to Adam when the whole Law was comprehended in one precept, neither made him holy, nor was it given for that purpose. It was given as the *condition* of his continuance in Paradise, not as the *means* of imparting the obedience by which that continuance should be secured. And when it pleased God, in the giving of the Sinai covenant, to expand the expression of his will into ten precepts, so far was

it done from the intention of enabling man to hope for heaven from his obedience to those ten precepts, that it was given for the directly contrary purpose, to reduce him to utter hopelessness of justifying himself by the Law. For "the Law entered"—not that sin might be diminished—but "that the offence might abound," (Rom. v. 20.) it multiplied transgression by multiplying the precept; for every additional Law given to man, shorn of his spiritual ability by sin, did but render his hope from the Law more desperate as it increased his guilt. Hence it is through the Law that "sin abounds," "the strength of sin is the law:" (1 Cor. xv. 56.) it is the Law that gives sin the dominion over us. As the Apostle plainly intimates when he ascribes our freedom from sin to grace: "For sin shall not have the dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." (Rom. vi. 14.) The Law never yet freed a soul from the yoke of sin; this is the exclusive privilege of grace. And, if possible, he is yet more explicit on the inability of the Law to sanctify: "the Law was not made for a righteous man," it was not made either to make a man righteous or to keep him so; yet the Law has its use and that a most important one; it is made to curb the unrighteous; the restraint of unrighteousness and not the imparting of righteousness is its purpose: it "is made for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly, and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers,

for manslaughter," &c. (1 Tim. i. 7. 9.) Human society could not exist without the restraints of Law; and it is to restrain from evil that laws are enacted, not to enable to good. The object of Law both human and divine is the same; to enjoin the rule of duty, and to impose the penalty of disobedience; but no law gives ability to the subject of it to perform its provisions.<sup>1</sup>

This ability to perform the precept of the Law, is the peculiar gift as it is the peculiar glory of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. He came to fulfil all righteousness; and while not one jot or tittle departed from the Law till all was fulfilled, our violations of the Law being atoned for by his blood, its perfect requisitions being accomplished by his obedience, and its righteousness again imparted to man by his Spirit, he is eminently "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that BELIEVETH." (Rom. x. 4.) What the Law was unable to effect on account of our imperfection, God in mercy did effect through the all-sufficiency

<sup>1</sup> "Men fearing God are thereby a great deal more effectually, than by positive laws, restrained from doing evil; inasmuch as those laws have no farther power than over our outward actions only, whereas unto men's inward cogitations, unto the privy intents and motions of their hearts, religion serveth for a bridle."—Hooker, Ec. Pol. v. 2.

Chains may confine the hand, and prisons may immure the body; but "inward cogitations," "privy intents, and motions of the heart," which constitute the real man,—the man within, can be swayed by principle alone. The Gospel is the storehouse of principle.

of his Incarnate Son: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 3, 4.) Our obedience to the Law therefore is not the result of an imposed precept, authoritatively enforced on our incapable nature; but it is the result of the operation of God's Spirit on our sinful hearts. It is the promise of the New Covenant, and not the precept of mere Law; "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." (Heb. viii. 10.) They shall no more be written as inoperative powerless precepts upon tables of stone; they shall not be written as they are in our churches on tablets of wood, or as they are in our Bibles on pages of paper, and thus be presented to the outward eye; but these laws shall be put into our minds by the Spirit, that we shall have a spiritual understanding of them; and written in our hearts by the same Spirit so that we shall approve, admire, and love them: in a word we shall have an "understanding heart," which is the brief scriptural compendium of spiritual communion and of Christian attainment. The Sinai Covenant never annexed any power of obedience to the Law which it enjoined: this is the exclusive privilege and peculiar glory of the Gospel.

It is to the grace of the Gospel and not to the

precept of the Law that the Apostles ascribe their *sanctification*. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another;” (Titus iii. 3—5.) what caused the change in them then from sin to holiness? not the precept of the Law, “but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,” &c. See also Rom. v. 6—11, and Ephes. ii. 1—6.

So *holiness* is not ascribed to the conviction or power of the precept, but to the operation of the Spirit on the renewed heart. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” (Eph. ii. 10.) “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John i. 12, 13.) Our *obedience* also is the result of faith and the Holy Spirit, not of reason subjecting the man to the requisitions of a legal precept: it is “the obedience of faith”—seeing ye have purified your souls in *obeying* the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren.” (1 Peter i. 22.) “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto *obedience*.” (1 Pet. i. 2.)

Neither under the Gospel are men called upon to obey the Law, or to be holy but upon Gospel motives. After a full display of the blessed mercies of the Gospel in the eleven first chapters of his epistle to the Romans, the Apostle uses them all as Gospel motives of obedience; "I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God," not by the precept of the Law, "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service." And this willing sacrifice of the whole man to God is never under the Gospel expected from the requisition of the Law, but from the love and mercy of the Gospel. "For the love of Christ constraineth us! because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) Believers are "bought with a price," and love, and gratitude, and joy, are the powerful motives which constrain them to glorify God in their "body and their spirit which are his." (1 Cor. vi. 20.) See also Colossians iii. 12, and the following verses.

Nor is it ever intimated that the insisting on obedience to the legal precept, by the bare statement of that precept, can ever cause the spiritual Paradise to flourish again upon the earth: this great moral change is uniformly ascribed in Scripture to the promise of the New Covenant—



the gift of the Spirit ; for it is only when “the Spirit” shall “be poured upon us from on high” that “the wilderness” shall “be a fruitful field.” (Isaiah xxxii. 15.)

And does not our Church confirm this view of our legal inability and the Gospel sufficiency, in her Communion Service ? The rubrick which precedes the declaration of the Law is full to our purpose. “Then shall the Priest, turning to the people, rehearse distinctly all the TEN COMMANDMENTS ; and the People, still kneeling, shall after every commandment ask God mercy for their transgression thereof in the time past, and grace to keep the same for the time to come, as followeth.” Here it is intimated that grace alone can enable us to keep the Law for the time to come : and grace is the produce of the gospel only ; for the Law knows no grace ; nothing but an unyielding demand of obedience. Accordingly we renounce all capacity of natural obedience to the Law ; we deplore our incapacity, and acknowledge that we are subjects of mercy alone, when after each commandment we implore, “Lord have mercy upon us,” for we cannot keep this law ; and we fly for refuge to the Gospel, when we pray, “and incline our hearts to keep this law,” “thou alone canst incline our hearts by thy Spirit, give us, O Lord, a willing obedience, and dispose our affections to love and keep this Law :” and we conclude our petitions by pleading the very words of the New Covenant, as the only

source of spiritual obedience; "and write all these thy laws in our hearts we beseech thee." "Remember thy promise, O Lord in thy New Covenant of mercy, and give us that thing which by nature we cannot have, a hearty desire to do thy will, and to obey thy commandments."

Shall then the old objection be again thrown in our teeth—you make void the law through faith? If so we must with the Apostle reject the accusation with abhorrence, and say, "God forbid:" nay, so far are we from making it void, that we render it its largest effect, we give it its firmest establishment, we ascribe to it its highest honours.

The law is a copy of the divine image, a transcript of the perfections of God. It is holiness in the precept; the divine nature in the rule. It is spirituality in detail: it is expanded justice, holiness, goodness, wisdom, and truth: it is the moral arrangement projected by the love of God for the temporal and eternal happiness of man: it is man's perfection, because the All-wise God has placed in it the perfection of his own will. The law must therefore be the order of human happiness, because it is the rule of human goodness, according to the will of God: it is the path of rectitude, and must consequently be the path of man's choicest blessedness. The smallest obliquity from it, must be misery, as it is sin; the constant walk in it must be happiness, as it is obedience. The slightest

deviation from it, suggested by apparent advantage, is the short-sightedness of sin opposing itself to the ruled will of God ; all adherence to its spiritual rule, though tried to the utmost under the discouragements of fear, or the imposing solicitations of a greater expediency, is the consistency of holiness trusting God with the unfailing rectitude of his own precept, and the infallible perfection of his own will. Let man but attain to the perfection of the rule, and he attains the highest moral perfection of which his nature is capable ; for the rule is the expression of the divine will towards him ; and in the performance of the will of the Creator is necessarily placed the greatest well-being of the creature. It is therefore the sum of our sanctification as it is the sum of God's will towards us, and consequently must be the sum of our happiness. To this moral Law then, which is prescribed by God as the perfection of our nature, belongs in its place and degree the fine encomium pronounced on Law in the abstract. " Of Law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world : all things in heaven and earth do her homage ; the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power : both angels, and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and

joy.”<sup>1</sup> Apply this to that Law of which man is the subject, and so exquisite is its blessedness, so extensive is its rule.

And shall we make void this Law? God indeed forbid; no, we would exert every power to establish it in every heart, and to induce man to secure his own greatest happiness in unsinning obedience to its sway. But the Law cannot make man obedient to its own rule, any more than a casket of jewels can give strength to the hand of an infant to bear itself away. The Gospel then must do for the Law what the Law cannot do for itself. “If there had been a law given which could have given life; verily righteousness should have been by the law;” but no such law could be given to fallen man, without lowering the divine perfections to the level of man’s imperfections. Instead therefore of abating one iota from the glory of his own attributes, by lowering the standard of his Law to accommodate the incapacity of man; the Eternal Wisdom sent the Second Person in the Tri-une Jehovah, to assume our incapable nature: that by imparting to that nature the virtue of his own Godhead, he might make man the very “righteousness of God in him;” (2 Cor. v. 21.) might by his blood atone for those violations of the Law of which man had been guilty, by his obedience perfect all righteousness in the

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, Ec. Pol. end of Book I.

human subject, and by his Spirit impart the very image of the divine nature, of which the Law is a copy, to the human soul. See then the honour of the Law vindicated by God-man, the perfection of the Law accomplished by God-man, and the end of the Law, as the perfection of our nature, established by God-man, in restoring the spirituality of the Law as the sanctification of man to his recovered soul. Here then, I re-state it, is the grand mistake upon which all human rule has proceeded up to this hour ; that men are attempting to do that by the precept of Law, which the Law never was given to effect, and which it never can effect in its incapable subject, man ; but which the rich Gospel of grace, with its promise, and its power, and its encouragements, and its atoning blood, and its quickening Spirit, and its Paternal love is provided, expressly provided to do for it. The rudeness of the blast does not draw the traveller to the wind, but drives him from it ; and the ruder the blast the greater the distance. The Law with its perfect precept, and its rigorous penalty, can only drive man to a distance from God ; and the more acutely the perfection of that precept is apprehended, and the more unreservedly the justice of that penalty is admitted, the more awfully that distance is felt, till hope is utterly lost in despair. It is the sun of grace, with all its warmth, and light, and benignity, and love, which encourages the traveller to look up at a countenance beaming with the sweetest kindness,

and to approach a presence where mercy is seated at the right hand of glory ; where obedience is the richest privilege, and holiness is consummate happiness.<sup>1</sup>

Will it be said, My Dear Friend, that I have

<sup>1</sup> The distinct uses of the Law and the Gospel are clearly stated by Bradford. “ God’s law requireth nothing of us, but that which was in our nature before the fall, which we see is impossible for us to pay accordingly ; and yet God, not unjust in that he asketh of us nothing thereby, but the self-same thing which he gave us in our creation. The law then, and the precepts of God were given after the fall of man, not that man should thereby get life and the thing which was lost by sin, (for the blessed Seed was promised for the recovering hereof and to him that pertained,) but that man by it might know sin, and what he had lost, thereby to desire more deeply the promised Seed, by whom as we be received, so our evils be not imputed, and that we being renewed by his holy Spirit and new seed, should as new-born babes desire, and by will begin to do the law of God, which after our deliverance forth of this corrupt body, and man of sin, by death, we shall without all let fully accomplish, and at the length receive the body to be spiritual (as Paul saith) and holy, ready to obey and serve the Spirit, as a helper, rather than a hinderer. Oh ! happy day, when wilt thou appear ! ”

—“ I would have the end wherefore God gave his law to be considered, namely, not for man to get thereby eternal life, which appertained to the promised seed ; but to shew man what sin is, and what by sin he lost, that he might by his inability be driven to desire of very necessity the promised **Messias**, and so by him to receive the Spirit ; where through being regenerate, he might learn to love the law, to take it as a directory and rule to live by, and to hedge in his old man from controlling.”—Fathers, &c. vi. pp. 389, 390.



assigned a disproportionate degree of attention to this subject. If so, I can only say that as the very pith and soul of our question,—salvation by the promise, and not by the precept—it seemed to me to deserve the space assigned in this letter. A volume is required to do it justice; for it appears to me, that the renovation of the world after the image of its God, depends on the right understanding of this statement, and the consequent enforcement of it in practice. It is no less a question than this, whether the principle of moral amelioration on which men have hitherto acted, is not utterly false—whether they have not been counteracting the great principle of holiness revealed by God for this purpose, and whether the present state, not of the heathen world merely, but of the Church—not of the two great populous branches of that Church now sunk in Greek and Latin corruption, but of the Reformed Church, and of that portion of it confessedly the best reformed, does not too plainly and too lamentably exhibit the inefficacy of the principle hitherto employed to effect the improvement of mankind? Six thousand years are nearly past, and how fearfully distant from God is both the uncivilized and civilized world, the Unchristian and the Christian, the Unreformed and Reformed! And what is the reason? Is it that God has revealed no adequate remedy for the evil? Certainly not. Nearly eighteen hundred years have enjoyed a perfect Gospel, a gospel charged with the fullest supplies

of renewing grace. Is it then that man has not only neglected to apply the remedy, but that he has counteracted the appointment of God? Certainly both history, and the ordinary practice of Christendom at this hour declare this to be the case; for where is the community, where is the Church, I would even ask, where are the families in which the precept of Law has not been enforced as the dominant principle of moral amelioration, and not the promise of grace quickened into renovating virtue by the Spirit of the living God?

And have not the artifices of the arch-enemy of human improvement borne ample testimony to the truth of the above remarks? Is it not against the doctrine of free grace that he has directed his most determined opposition whether it be by force or fraud? He has arrayed both the moral, and intellectual, and the very spiritual world also against them as demoralising, as absurd, and as even subversive of spirituality itself. The moral man proud of his own virtues, asserts that as grace abounds, sin must abound: the intellectual man sees nothing but folly in that "foolishness of preaching," which sinks the intellectual superiority of the wise, and the designing policy of the prudent into dust, and exalts the docility and simplicity of the child: and the spiritual man untrue to his own principles, and unjust to the grace which has led him so far on his way to heaven, listens to the suggestions of

unsubdued pride, and mixes up his own strength with the freeness and fulness of grace ; and perhaps raises the loudest outcry against the full declaration of the Gospel. Hence it is that God's loving mercy and truth have been withheld from the great Congregation ; and the cry of antinomianism has been most perseveringly repeated, where those very doctrines which are alone given to effectuate the Law in the improvement of mankind, have been most successfully preached. I conceive this to be the master-piece of Satan in opposing the doctrines of grace : he assumes the port of an Angel of light ; he mingles among the ranks of the army of truth itself, and has address enough to turn their own weapons against the very cause they would support. When shall the blessed hour arrive, when every Minister shall be entitled to take up the words of the Psalmist and to say, " I have preached righteousness in the great congregation : lo, I have not refrained my lips O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation : I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation ? " (Psalm xl. 9, 10.) This is that " foolishness of preaching," BELIEVE AND LIVE, against which the devil has ever yet successfully opposed human wisdom, human prudence, and human power ; and under the pretence of honouring the very Law he hates, he has rendered God's appointed mode of establishing the

Law in the human heart, contemptible and effete. It has hitherto been driven into holes and corners, the rich possession of a few, safe in their meanness, and secure in the contempt of their cotemporaries; or when it has appeared in pulpits of more public note in all its genuine beauty and loveliness, the men who have preached it, have been "men wondered at," considered as exceptions and peculiars, not as examples to be followed, but rather as beacons to be avoided.

We have now entered the first half of the nineteenth century of Christianity; and if the question be asked why has not the Gospel been more successful in turning man to God? the only just answer that can be given, appears to me to be, because the plain simple Gospel of Jesus Christ, the renovation of man by grace, has not been preached. If man had been true to God, God had certainly been true to man. The word of God is "go ye into all the world, and preach the GOSPEL to every creature," (Mark xvi. 15.) and if the present *ungospelled* state of the world may be accounted for in part by the Gospel not having been received; must not by far the largest part of the account be charged to the real fact, that the Gospel has not been preached?

This is not the place to show what that Gospel is; it will be admitted to a more seasonable consideration at the conclusion of the next letter.

And now, My Dear Friend, if it be a desirable object, to apply in all its vital energy, that prin-

ciple of renovation, which the Father of Mercies has revealed for the spiritual improvement of mankind,—the promise in order to the precept—how simply does the interpretation of Baptism and its kindred Services, stated throughout these letters, effect the same ! The believing Parent, on the birth of his Child, accepts it as a child of God, as it is interested in the promises made to the children of believers. The Child is the gift of God ; it is received from him, and it is devoted to him ; it is educated under a persuasion that “ he is faithful that ” hath “ promised,” (Heb. x. 23.) and in confidence that he is interested in the salvation of Christ, the Child is instructed to walk worthy of his holy calling, to believe that Christ has justified him by his blood, and is sanctifying him by his Spirit ; and from these blessed considerations to draw constant encouragement to walk before him in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life. Thus as the parties believe the Gospel, even so do they attain the practical holiness of the Law.

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE is, that—A NEW ARGUMENT WOULD THUS BE AFFORDED TO MINISTERS AND PARENTS, AND SPONSORS, AND TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH, TO INSIST ON THE BECOMING CONVERSATION OF EVERY CHURCHMAN FROM THE BLESSEDNESS OF HIS BAPTISMAL PRIVILEGES, AND THE SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY OF HIS BAPTISMAL VOWS.

It is but too evident that much confusion exists

on this subject, under what character a Minister of our Church is to address his people.

To address them as really *converted* without distinction, while they are evidencing their privileges by no corresponding practice, bringing forth no fruits meet for repentance, or expressive of real faith, would doubtless be “a dangerous downfall;” would encourage a false security, confound nature with grace, and ascribe to the mere *opus operatum* what is only due to the *opus operantis*—to the mere external application of the Sacrament, what is due to the gracious effect actually wrought in the soul.<sup>1</sup> Such a ministry must necessarily be

<sup>1</sup> If the following able statement of Hooker’s be admitted as authority, the question, as to the mere reception of Baptism being actual regeneration, is for ever set at rest.—“Baptism is an action in part *Moral*, in part *Ecclesiastical*, and in part *Mystical*; *moral*, as being a duty which men perform towards God: *ecclesiastical*, in that it belongeth unto God’s Church as a public duty; finally *mystical*, if we respect what God doth thereby intend to work.

“The greatest *moral* perfection of baptism consisteth in men’s devout obedience to the law of God, which law requireth both the outward act or thing done, and also that religious affection which God doth so much regard, that without it whatsoever we do is hateful in his sight; who therefore is said to respect *adverbs* more than *verbs*, because the end of his law, in appointing what we shall do, is our own perfection; which perfection consisteth chiefly in the virtuous disposition of the mind, and approveth itself to him, not by *doing*, but by doing *well*. Wherein appeareth also the difference between human and divine laws, the one of which two are content with *opus operatum*, the other requires *opus*



dead and barren—mere profession without spirit: and while “the blind” thus continue to “lead the blind,” they are walking in the security of Popish self-complacency, and must “both fall” together “into the ditch.” (Matt. xv. 14.)

On the other hand, to address a baptised people as heathens, must be equally a mistake in the contrary extreme. It is admitted that there are baptised sensualists, baptised extortioners, and “baptised infidels;” but even these are to be addressed not without hope. They have been baptised; they have assumed the Christian name; they still bear it: they would be offended if we deprived them of it; and we have a right, till they absolutely renounce it, to call upon them for consistency, to show forth the excellency of Baptismal

*operantis*: the one do but claim the deed, the other especially the mind. So that according to laws which principally respect the heart of men, works of religion being not religiously performed, cannot morally be perfect.

“Baptism as an *ecclesiastical* work, is for the manner of performance ordered by divers ecclesiastical laws, providing that as the sacrament itself is a gift of no mean worth, so the ministry thereof might in all circumstances appear to be a function of no small regard.

“All that belongeth to the *mystical* perfection of baptism outwardly is the element, the word, and the serious application of both unto him which receiveth both; whereunto if we add that secret reference which this action hath to life and remission of sins, by virtue of Christ’s own compact solemnly made with his Church, to accomplish fully the sacrament of baptism there is not any thing more required.” Ec. Pol. v. 62.

privileges, and the due performance of Baptismal vows. Both consistency and charity demand it of us; for faith will never surrender hope, so long as the day of grace remains: and even then, it is not for us to *pronounce* unfavourably of the departed, as it is not for us to restrain grace, but to give it the largest credit and confidence. Our Church exhorts every sick member without exception, “remember the profession which you made unto God in your Baptism,” and she proceeds to examine him on the very particulars of his Baptismal vows. She knows no other examination: and if we were as Ministers in the habit of addressing our people as a baptised people, responsible both for Baptismal privileges and vows, inviting them to a constant retrospect, and calling upon them for a holy consistency,—not only would the Pulpit harmonise with the Desk, but the people would be practically trained to the importance of their Baptism, and Ministers would no longer be reduced to the difficulties, that I have known some good men to labour under in their ministry, of either addressing their people as heathens, or of dividing their audience into such nice distinctions, as seemed to deprive the Gospel of its peculiar loveliness and freedom, and utterly to destroy the idea of the Church being a “Communion of Saints.”

But let the sentiment once prevail that the visible Church is a “Communion of” professing “Saints;” and the Minister’s address is one con-

tinued call upon them for consistency of conversation. It should be often explicitly mentioned, and always implied, that the vows of God are upon them, and that the privileges of Baptism invite them to be holy that they may be happy. Christ their Saviour demands it of them, their Parents demand it, their Sponsors demand it, the Church demands it, their own temporal and eternal happiness demands it. They have taken upon themselves a public profession, let them acquit themselves of it; they profess to be Christians, “ what manner of persons ” then should they “ be, in all holy conversation and godliness ! ” (2 Peter iii. 11.) they were baptised in the name of Christ, let them be pure as he was pure and “ walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.” (Eph. iv. 1.)

The Parent in the nursery, or in the domestic circle, has the advantage of the same argument. “ Remember the profession which you made unto God in your Baptism.” If duties are performed with difficulty, as they always are from the depravity of our nature, the Parent may thus address the child, “ Go to God and ask him for his Spirit to enable you : if the world or your own heart are too powerful for you, apply to God in your own weakness, and ask him for his strength ; and if you do not think that these great privileges belong to you, that as “ a member of Christ ” you perceive no benefit of that union, ask him for faith, and he will give it you ; and you shall find the blessedness

of prayer, for he will show you that he has adopted you as his child, by the freedom with which you shall say, "Abba, Father;" and this holy communion begun with him here, shall be both an earnest and an evidence to you, that you are "an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," and shall hereafter enjoy a richer communion with him in glory."

The Sponsor has the advantage of the same argument in his occasional visits to his charge. Influenced by a steady purpose to acquit himself of his obligations, he may continually exercise his kindness, by questions, which take for granted the acknowledgment of Baptismal responsibility by the Child; and in conversing with him respecting his tempers and duties, an easy resort may be had, and a powerful ally would be found in an appeal to the privileges and vows of his Baptism.

And were the Church sensible of its blessed privileges as a "Communion of Saints," every member of that Church, to which the Child belonged, would take an interest in his spiritual growth; and in kindness and affection, would call upon him, to show forth in his life, a real profession of Baptismal privileges and vows. Let the Church declare its expectations from him, and acquaint him with the interest it takes in his spiritual welfare, the prayers it offers that grace may abound in him, and the hopes it conceives of his establishment in every good and holy way. What

a communion would each Parish present, did the Church in each Parish but avail itself of the opportunities which our Baptismal Service commits to her!

Nor let the Child himself be forgotten, the beloved subject of this variety of interests. The large concern that was thus taken for his spiritual growth, would induce him, under God, to feel interested for himself. He would be desirous of acquitting himself of his obligations; he would acknowledge that the vows of God were upon him; expectations continually expressed, would beget continual effort on his part to accomplish them. He would feel, that he was not only a sharer in the blessings of the family, but a sharer also in the blessings of the Church, the great family of our common Saviour, whom as he saw others delight to serve, he would delight to serve also. Here would be a reality in Baptism: he would see it acknowledged by his dearest friends, and he would acknowledge it also. It would be presented to his experience as a tissue of privileges, connected with love, and kind concern, and blessing from all with whom he had to do. A "Communion of Saints" surrounds him; and the loveliness of the society would induce him to become a saint also. "I will go also." (Zech. viii. 21.)

You see then, how vast an advantage this argument would give to all the parties concerned in the spiritual welfare of the Child,—the Minister, the Parent, the Sponsor, the Church. "Remem-

ber the profession which you made unto God in your Baptism." Nor can we suppose that these advantages would be lost on the Child, or that a child of such prayers and such interests could perish.

I conclude this enumeration of ADVANTAGES with a few remarks on the SIMPLICITY, GENERALITY, CERTAINTY, and REALITY of this proposed mode of spiritual renovation.

It is SIMPLE. This is an age when we seem to be returning to our allegiance to the sovereignty of common sense. Prejudices, inveteracies, fashions, habits, and prescriptions, are now subjected to discussion and to correction. And as our regard for common sense prevails, so will the simplicity of a measure be one of its surest recommendations to our acceptance. How exquisitely simple is the principle of the Bible Society! it is upon this, under God, that its existence rests. "The Bible is the word of God, and it is the duty of every man to circulate it."—It is the simplicity of the new system of education also which has introduced it to such general practice. It is the simplicity of the above interpretation which constitutes its beauty; there is no complication of human effort, or intricacy of human system: here all is simple: God has given a promise of blessing to you and yours, all that you have to do, is to accept and apply it.

It is GENERAL. It is a mode of amelioration adapted to every class, relation and character. It



suits all conditions from the throne to the cottage. The rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned, the weak, the strong, equally need it. Whether a man is a king or a subject, whether in trade or profession: whether son or parent, young or old, whatever his situation or circumstances, all need to be Christians. As a man you are God's creature, as a redeemed man you are his reconciled and renewed creature. All that relates to human circumstance and condition is contingent and incidental; you may live in a mansion or a poor-house, you may know much or little, you may rule a kingdom or a family, you may be young Samuel or aged Eli; but you stand before God accepted or rejected, as he beholds you in Christ Jesus. Soon these earthly distinctions and relations shall be no more; earth with all its toil, its pleasure, and its pursuits, will have past away; and the question to be asked for eternity will be, not only were you a man, but were you a Christian man,—a man made whole by faith in Christ,—who lived on his promise, found your happiness in the performance of his precept of holiness, are justified by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and now seek to be glorified in his glory? Baptismal regeneration accepts you as a fallen creature, without regard to outward condition, presented in faith of the promise, and imparts to you that thing, which as a mere man, by nature, you cannot have,—the graces, the powers, and the privileges of the Gospel.

It is CERTAIN. So surely as God is true, his promise is true, and the performance of it infallible and certain. That his promise to the children of believers as practically applied by our Church in her Baptismal Service is not attended with more frequent accomplishment, is sufficiently accounted for, I trust, above. The failure is not on his part but on our own: it is not that God's promise fails, but that man's faith fails. "God is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is," on the contrary, "long-suffering to us-ward." (2 Peter iii. 9.) It is the negligence, and indifference, and unbelief of man which deprive the promise of its effect. In fact we counteract God; we expose our children to the follies and vanities of a world, which, on their part, we have solemnly renounced; we have courted the enemies of God, instead of having abjured them; we have roused the corrupt desires of the heart by worldly lures and excitements; perhaps we have taught our children to smile at the aid of the Spirit as enthusiasm, even of that Spirit, of whom we are teaching them to say at the very time,—“who sanctifieth,” is sanctifying “me, and all the elect people of God.” Let the promise only be fairly tried out in practice, and who shall impeach the fidelity of the God of all grace who has made it? It is the very nature of faith to wait: and “here is the patience and faith of the saints;” (Rev. xiii. 10.) for the believing Parent or Sponsor, who on the ground of the pro-

mise presents his child to the " Communion of the Saints " for the Baptismal sign and seal and pledge of the blessing, never to quit his hold on the promise in favour of his child so long as the child enjoys his day of grace : that day extends throughout the whole life of the Child from his cradle to his grave. As faith devotes the Child to God at the first moment of his birth, so faith commits his soul to God at the last gasp of his life ; nor will faith ever quit its hold of the promise, till the promise has arrived at its full accomplishment, and faith is perfected in sight above. Or if this should be deemed an excessive trial of assurance, as in these days of lapsed Reformation I am fearful that it may be, I would then say, let the case be fairly tried out ; let our Congregations be constituted on this principle ; let our children be thus introduced into " the Communion of the Saints : " let faith and prayer and Sponsorial vigilance and encouragement, and renunciation of the world, and Christian privilege, and free grace, and the peculiar loveliness of Gospel virtues and Gospel happiness be harmoniously and proportionably displayed and exercised towards the Child and pressed upon his notice ; and if failure should apparently attend such a state of blessedness, which God might occasionally permit, to try our faith to the utmost, or to secure the sovereignty of his own will,—yet is there a living man who bears the Christian name, and who knows any thing of the love and mercy of the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who would not pronounce such a state of things truly blessed; and deem himself entitled, by the general promise to the Children of believers, to elevate his faith to an assurance that his Child, thus privileged with Baptismal blessings, should be a partaker of sanctification in time, and of glorification in eternity?

But indeed is not this objection to our statement, drawn from the failure of the Baptismal promise rather hypothetical than substantial? For though it be admitted, that the children of believing Parents do too often defeat their hopes; yet in the present low estimate of Baptismal efficiency, it must be almost impossible for the objector to prove his case: for where are even the religious Parents, who have brought up their children with a continual reference to their Baptismal vows and privileges, a frequent pleading of God's promise to the children of believers, and a steady and unvarying faith in the certainty of its performance? It is much to be feared, that the paucity of the instances which could be found, would render the decision of the question from actual experience almost impracticable. Let not our faith then be staggered by this or any other objection; let us accept the promise as that of a faithful God, and in the use of means calculate on its certain accomplishment.

It is REAL. If I may judge of the general acceptance of these sentiments, by those who may favour them with a perusal, from the acceptance

they have first met with, from those to whom I have occasionally mentioned them; I must be prepared to expect, that, from the novelty of the statement, at this day, now removed nearly three centuries from the period of the Reformation, the reality of these Baptismal blessings will be questioned. It will I know be said, "Doth he not speak parables?" (Ezek. xx. 49.) It is all a fable, a tale to amuse children. Had I but the teachableness of children to deal with, I should have no apprehension of quickly proving the reality of my case to their satisfaction: "In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." (1 Cor. xiv. 20.) Were we but men of God in spiritual understanding, combining with the same the simplicity of the child, we should resemble "those reverend Fathers and great Divines in the days of King Edward the Sixth,"<sup>1</sup> who themselves acknowledged its blessedness, by proposing it to our acceptance; and who have left it on record, sealed with their own blood, for our perpetual encouragement and improvement. Had we but the faith of the Reformers, we should enjoy the blessedness of their Reformation. It is this faith which can alone introduce that religion of grace, which is founded upon the promise; and for want of which our Liturgy has become too much a dead and unintelligible letter. It is faith only that can give the letter spirit; and realise to us the blessed

<sup>1</sup> 'Thirtieth Canon.

experience, that generally every promise belongs to us which we have faith enough to apply to ourselves. Faith gives the grand reality to Christianity; it "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) The Reformers were men of faith; it was their great object to reform the Church from dead works, and confidence in things that are seen, to the great realities of faith, and the substance of things not seen. They rebuilt their Reformed Church, therefore, on the promise of a faithful God; and as the faith of men acted on that promise, so were they to receive the blessing. "Believe" then and "be established," you shall find the blessings of the promise to be real: but "if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established;" unbelief shall deprive you of the substance of the promise; and shall render it nugatory and vain.

Here then is a summary of ADVANTAGES arising from our proposed interpretation of the Baptismal Service of no equivocal character; and which, if carried into effect in all our Parishes, could not fail, by the blessing of God, of effecting our National Reformation. In this Christianity, there would be a substantial reality: it would be a union of holy men, combined to make all holy around them, and to change a community of mere men with a Christian profession, into a "Communion of Saints" with Christian graces, duties, and privileges; proving in lively experience "what is



that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) It would be making us just to our privileges, by bringing us back to our principles. The Church of England is capable of producing all this blessedness: let us show that we know her real value by calling her virtues forth into active agency, and giving them one universal spread throughout the land, which she takes under the shadow of her wing. But once recommend this interpretation to general adoption in our Parishes; and like the witnesses in the Apocalypse, we may trust that "the Spirit of life from God" shall "enter into them," and they shall stand "upon their feet." (Rev. xi. 11.) By this interpretation we render all our formularies intelligible—we display the beauty and symmetry and admirable proportion of the Church to which we belong—we exhibit in lively reality the blessedness of "the Communion of Saints"—we improve the administration of the whole Service of our Church—and the blessings of "the Communion of Saints" being once felt and improved, we should naturally be desirous of cultivating them by a more frequent observance of the means of grace—we should then give to each Sacrament that honour which is its respective due—from the blessings of this communion the Reformation of our Ecclesiastical Polity must necessarily arise, as well as the restoration and preservation of unity in the Church—education would receive general improvement both in its principles and practice—the doctrine

of election would be rescued from the misrepresentations of caricature, and would appear practical as it is lovely, "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons"—"the praise of the glory of his grace" would be secured to God, whose honour demands that man should be saved by grace alone—and that grace would be doing its own peculiar work in correcting the false principle of human improvement by the Law which both Churchman and Layman have been so long and so ineffectually urging—it would afford to Ministers, and Parents, and Sponsors, and to every member of the Church, a new argument, to insist on the becoming conversation of every Churchman, from the blessedness of his Baptismal privileges, and the solemn responsibility of his Baptismal vows—and the excellence of this interpretation would receive its full confirmation, in the *simplicity, generality, certainty, and reality* of this promised mode of spiritual renovation.—What a burst of blessedness is here ! till I had entered the portal of our Church by this avenue—salvation by the promise and not by the precept—I formed no idea of the beauty, the symmetry, the sublimity, the loveliness, and the perfection of the communion to which I belonged. My eyes were long opening to the real blessedness of our condition ; and like a man before whose enraptured view, a splendid prospect bursts at once upon his eye, I could scarcely believe the reality of the scenery I was admiring. But I have reason to bless God, for

having, as I trust he has, conducted me to this land of substantial grace, this city of living blessings; and that I belong to a National Church, which, retrograde as she is in practice from the purity of her Reformation, contains within herself every principle of sound renovation; and which only claims to have that principle admitted to active operation, that under the Divine Spirit, she may diffuse her graces over every Parish in the land, and combine every member of her household in one large and lovely family of Christian amity, and joy, and peace.

But is it possible, it may be said, that effects so truly excellent can spring from a cause so apparently small?

Let it be remembered, that there is nothing small with God; that every "day" has its "small things;" (Zech. iv. 10.) that both analogy and experience confirm the justice of our principle; and that as all things in nature and providence originate in the seed, so that grace has its seed-time also. And this is in my view, no small confirmation of our principle; it harmonises with the ordinary character of the divine operations.

All things have their nurseries, where their principles *begin* to vegetate before they flourish and ripen into effect. Grace has its nursery as well as the seed its hot-bed. And, I own, I form no contracted notion both of the rectitude and efficiency of the above principle of spiritual renewal, because it is both philosophically and spiritually

true. Our system is a system of principles: it begins in the nursery at the first gasp of the Infant's life; it begins before in the faith of the believing Parent; and the first embrace which the Child receives, is not that of natural affection alone, but of lively gratitude and ardent thanksgiving to God for this mortal—immortal gift. Wise men look to nurseries for effects; unwise men look for effects without nurseries. It is here that the wisdom of our Church is eminently displayed; she begins in the nursery. The Child is there a child of God; and in this blessed persuasion she encourages the faithful Parent and Sponsor to educate him with persevering and undoubting faith. Her principle receives complete confirmation from all the operations of God. In *nature* one atom of matter originates a splendid universe: in *providence* one grain of wheat renews the yearly crop: in the dispensation of *grace*, a swaddled infant, upheld by human arms, and fed by human milk in a stable, exhibits the nursery of *glory*; and in the power of grace actually imparted in sanctifying influence to the soul, “the path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more to the perfect day.” (Prov. iv. 18.) The analogy of God in all his four kingdoms, *nature*, *providence*, *grace*, and *glory*, commends our principle, and the word of God expressly and repeatedly confirms the same. It remains only for us to trust him with the performance of his own promise; and our trust will

best be evinced, in training our children, not as children of nature, but as children of grace, or that we would be consistent in practically treating them, as we teach them to call themselves, "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

And here, My Dear Friend, let me ask, do not the times, and the signs of the times, demand from us an active co-operation with the Spirit of God in carrying this principle of spiritual renewal into effect? Are there any means now in action apparently adequate to this purpose? Can any reasonable man expect this renewal from our present mode of education? I own that to me, such an expectation appears to be perfectly childish. Nor does it appear to me that after the defeated hopes of six thousand years in attempting to ameliorate mankind by the rigour of Law enforcing our corrupt nature to an impossible obedience, any thing but failure can attend our present expectations of success. We are not better than our fathers; and the Law which has failed to produce this effect in their days, will not produce a different effect in ours. Let us then try this simple mode of renovation, proposed by our Church in her best days. The experience of the last thirty years gives us ample encouragement. Which of us that looks back even for twenty years, and recollects the monthly meetings of a few friends in a private house, could then have believed that the Church Missionary Society would have attained such a

pitch of expansive usefulness, as it has pleased God to confer upon it? and in the infancy of its operations who could have anticipated the spread of the Bible Society's influence over the people, and nations, and languages it embraces? Man loves complexity; and often impedes his own designs by the intricacy of the process he devises to effect them. God loves simplicity; and the more simple the principle, the more is his honour advanced. And what principle is so well calculated to advance the glory of the latter day, the dawn of which perhaps our own eyes are even now beholding, as this which secures all the honour of that glory to God, while it provides at once the most simple, and the most ready mode of renovating human society, and with a Christian profession imparting a Christian spirit also. We complain of the degraded condition of Christian society; we pray that it may be improved: behold the means at hand: all is ready in the Baptismal provisions of our Church: all that we have to do is to be just to our own advantages, and true to the remedy prepared for us. Let us but trust the promise, use the means, water them with our prayers, and realise them by our faith; and here will be a just ground of expectation that our Israel shall be an Israel of God from Dan to Beersheba; that every Parish shall exhibit a Christian communion, that dissent shall be merged in the universal blessedness of such a dispensation; and that our land shall become



what the civil magistrate designs our Ecclesiastical Establishment, a land of vital Christians : and without doubt, at that hour, the whole earth shall call her blessed.

If an apology be demanded of me for the length to which this letter has extended, I must rest it upon the two following grounds. The first, that in tracing out the advantages resulting from the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service as applied in practice, a field of blessedness gradually opened to me, of the extent of which, at first, I was by no means aware ; the second, that I would speak as to wise men ; and show them the advantages of the principle recommended, before we proceed to state the means of carrying it into effect. Practical men must be convinced of the advantage of a practice before they adopt it ; and, I trust, that the ADVANTAGES enumerated are so evident, that we are now prepared to enter upon the consideration of the means, which yet remain to us to advance and to secure them.

## LETTER IX.

MODES HUMBLY SUGGESTED OF CARRYING THE  
SAME INTO EFFECT.

THE *first* point to be aimed at here is,—LET EVERY MAN BE FULLY PERSUADED IN HIS OWN MIND THAT THE ABOVE INTERPRETATION OF OUR BAPTISMAL SERVICE IS JUST; AND THAT IF CARRIED INTO EFFECT THROUGHOUT THE LAND, BY EVERY CHURCH IN EVERY PARISH, IT WOULD WITH GOD'S BLESSING PRODUCE A NATIONAL REFORMATION OF MANNERS, AND CHANGE A COMMUNITY OF MERELY PROFESSING CHRISTIANS, INTO A COMMUNION OF SAINTS EXHIBITING THE VITAL ENERGIES OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LOVE.

Let every man endeavour to look at the question apart from prejudice and affection; and with truly Berean ingenuousness rise above the discouragements of novelty and desuetude, and *nobly* pause to inquire whether these things are so. *Desuetude* might well discourage us; for with the loss of the above interpretation

of Baptism, all spirituality had well nigh disappeared from our Church; and our present more favourable condition presents but too formidable obstacles to our recovery to sound principles of Baptismal Regeneration. But let not the fear of *novelty* discourage us; for there is in fact nothing novel in the view we have given: on the contrary it is the doctrine of our sainted forefathers of the Reformation for which we plead: and it is nothing but desuetude that clothes it with the air of novelty. Let every member of our Church, especially every Minister of it, consider the plain terms of the Baptismal Service, as well as its general spirit and bearing; let him compare these with the Liturgy and each particular formulary; let him mark the harmony, and beauty, and consistency, and integrity, which this interpretation gives to the whole Book of Common Prayer: let him review the private sentiments of our Reformers, exactly harmonising with this view of their public authorised expression of them; let him superadd to this, the concurrent testimony of the Reformed Churches; let him reflect that it is unbelief alone which opposes this interpretation, while faith in the promise beholds it practicable as it is desirable; let him dwell on the manifold ADVANTAGES, which directly and necessarily flow from it—and let him then say, whether any other interpretation of our Services can be conceived, so justly consentaneous both with their letter and spirit, so

effectual for the purpose of spiritual renovation for which they were designed, at once so truly honourable to God, and so truly beneficial to man ?

The *next* point after conviction—is, TO SET ABOUT PRACTICALLY TO CARRY OUR CONVICTION INTO EFFECT.

And here example is of the last importance. Let every member, but especially Minister of our Church, introduce his child into the Church for Baptism “on Sundays and other Holy-days, when the most number of people come together ;” let the Child, on no other account than that of mere necessity, be baptised in private ; but let the notice of the “great Congregation” be earnestly excited, that the Child may have an interest in the prayers and sympathies of “the Communion of Saints,” into which it is thus publicly and conspicuously introduced ; let the Minister especially, selecting those of his Congregation who are the most approved for piety, assign the spiritual charge of his Child to them as its Sponsors, that the people having this public testimony of his own estimation of the importance of the Sacrament, may follow his example, and thus effect that word of their Minister, which his own practice recommends and confirms. “Doubt ye not therefore but earnestly believe,” is an address that comes with bad grace from the mouth of a Minister, who is not himself supposed to believe the reality of

those privileges he is recommending to the faith of another.

Again—LET THIS INTERPRETATION BE EXPLAINED AT LARGE FROM THE PULPIT.

An entirely new light will thus be thrown on all the Service of the Church ; and the Minister need not be afraid of not exciting an interest by his exposition : for his hearers will doubtless confirm the usefulness of it by expressing their satisfaction at the view he has exhibited of blessings and privileges hitherto unknown to them, and for his disclosing to them the beauties and consistencies of a worship, of the perfection of which they were before but little aware. The blessings of a Christian communion, is what few seem to understand, and still fewer to expect from their union with our Church. But let the Minister encourage this expectation, and it gives a new spirit to the whole of his administration of the Service ; it tends to dissipate weariness, to support the attention, and to give an energy and feeling unfelt before. And this is an improvement which the people will soon acknowledge ; they will answer the call with alacrity, when the Minister invites with earnestness, “ Let us pray : ” a general interest in the service will be taken by the Congregation, because a general interest is demanded by the voice and manner of the Minister. The Minister is a saint leading “ the Communion of the Saints ; ” and as they have fellowship one with another, so through that communion of the

Spirit, which unites them in fellowship “with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ,” (1 John i. 3.) they feel the Church to be, what it is ever intended to be to the faithful, “none other but the house of God, and—the gate of heaven.” (Gen. xxviii. 17.)

ANOTHER means is—A DISTINCT AND FREQUENT INQUIRY FROM THE PULPIT OF PARENTS AND SPONSORS, WHETHER THEY ARE INDEED TRAINING UP THE CHILDREN, FOR WHOM THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE TO THE CHURCH, ACCORDING TO HER REQUISITIONS IN THE DUE DISCHARGE OF THEIR VOWS, AND THE DUE ENJOYMENT OF THEIR PRIVILEGES.

Let them not only be urged to duty by a sense of responsibility, but encouraged to it by the blessedness which attends the discharge of it both to the Sponsor and the Child. Let the Minister declare his expectations, that their industry in teaching will, under God, be the means of preparing their charge to understand and enjoy his ministry, and his hope that when the Child is transferred to his public care as Minister to be catechised in the Congregation, he will rejoice his heart and that of the Church, by the competency of his knowledge, and his experimental acquaintance with spiritual things. Let them frequently be reminded that the hopes of the Church are the young of the flock, that they are intrusted to Sponsors expressly to bring up and to educate for her, and that both Minister and people, as well as



the Child, are most deeply interested in the success of their Sponsorial labours.

And let not the Child be forgotten in addresses from the pulpit: let him be especially addressed on the subject of his Baptism; be told into what a blessed communion he was then admitted; and how well adapted it is to make him happy: how the Minister is interested for him, how the Church feels for him, and prays for him, and how much she expects of him: that the honour of Christ demands his growth in grace, and his improvement in all spiritual good; that this generation is passing away, and that the Church looks to him for a succession of Ministers and saints, which shall maintain the cause of Christ upon earth, when that generation is gone. Topics of this character often addressed to the children of the Church, would, while the Sponsors “call upon them to hear sermons,” be the strongest inducement to their compliance, from the encouragement and benefit they derive from them.

Let this means be well supported by that which the Church appoints for the express purpose of communicating elementary knowledge, — A FREQUENT AND PERSEVERING INCULCATION AND EXPOSITION OF OUR ADMIRABLE CATECHISM.

Of all elementary Catechisms which I have ever seen, for the purpose of expository instruction, this appears to me to be the best. It is at once short and comprehensive, embracing in their rudiments all the leading topics of faith

and practice. But as one of its excellences is its brevity, since it is in this respect exactly suited to the memory of childhood, so another excellence is, that it forms the groundwork of inexhaustible exposition; and this exposition is indispensable to the Child's complete comprehension of the letter. And I must own that a facility of *vivâ voce* instruction in the opening of our Catechism to the common mind, by apt illustration and experimental application, appears to me to be the highest possible didactic attainment of a Minister of Christ. I had rather possess this one talent than all the glitter of human eloquence, and all the splendour of brilliant accomplishment that have yet enraptured mankind. It is the most excellent because the most useful: it is seen in its choicest exercise in the parables and conversations of our All-eloquent Redeemer. It is not the offspring of great talents, but of a simple soul: and that soul which is most imbued with the simplicity of Christ, will be the most successful imitator of his irresistibly interesting manner of communicating knowledge. The grand secret of Catechetical exposition appears to me to be, as in all true eloquence, to endeavour to impart your own impression of the subject to the heart of the learner. All didactic harshness of manner should be avoided; and that love which it is the object of the Catechist to inculcate on the Catechumen, should be the acknowledged vehicle in which he

conveys his instruction. It is not an understanding head merely that he aims to attain by his address, but an "understanding heart." Let the heart but once understand the truth in its blessedness, and the affections will soon press the other powers of the soul to concurrence. Let catechising then be experimental: let it be kindly addressed to the heart of every learner; let it exchange its stiffness, and coldness, and generality, for condescension, and interest and individual application; let it be constantly repeated: and if I might hope that this present day of fastidiousness, and consequently of indifference, would admit of such a wish, may the day arrive, when the Church is daily assembled, and the little ones of the flock periodically either present themselves, or are presented by their Sponsors for Catechetical instruction; when the Minister receives them with smiles of holy joy, as a parent does his children; and when the whole collected Church testifies the interest it takes in this scene, by many a glistening eye, and many a hearty prayer; and anticipates, with joy, the realising of its hopes, that thus "our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth," and "that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." (Psalm cxliv. 12.)

Another means similar to the above is,—THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THIS INTERPRETATION IN OUR SUNDAY AND OTHER SCHOOLS.

If possible, the superintendence of these nur-

series of principle should be submitted to active, and intelligent, and faithful Ministers of our Church. In communicating the faculty of reading, we are communicating a powerful talent, good or bad, as to its use or abuse : it may preserve us from the barbarism of nature, but it may rebarbarise us also with principled infidelity and corrupt over-refinement. It is only a Christian education that can form a Christian man. Let the Minister then and teacher of our schools, be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of this interpretation, and there will be a Gospel sweetness of manner recommending this Gospel interpretation of Baptism, throughout all their conduct with the children. The children are children of God, recognised as such by the Church, and it is the Minister's and teacher's object, to prepare them as inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Their Baptism will be constantly referred to ; they will be called upon to realise the vows and promises of their Sponsors : and all the arguments derived from their Baptismal engagement, which have been so frequently insisted on throughout these letters, will be continually applied. This is the true mode, according to my judgment, to make the whole population sound Churchmen. Show them the excellence of the system, by that which is of all arguments the most persuasive, their own experience of its blessings. Men may be attached to the Church from birth, and country, and education, and fashion,

and temporal interest or policy; but the firmest supporter of it, is the man who recognises it as a communion of living spirituality, the mother of his holy joys and consolations, the security for every temporal blessing, “the pillar and ground of” that “truth” (1 Tim. iii. 15.) which gives him hope of a glorious immortality. This is the man who with highest relish of its blessings, and therefore, most cordial prayers for its success, will take up the Psalmist’s words, “Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.” (Psalm cxxii. 9.) This man is a true Churchman: convinced by his own experience of the value of Baptismal privileges, it will be his unremitting endeavour as a Parent, a Sponsor, or as one of the Church, to give the largest honour to that from which he has derived so much. And as all the formularies of our Church are understood and enjoyed, in the degree that men really experience “the Communion of the Saints,” and as this communion is only intelligible, I apprehend, to its real extent as we behold these formularies coupled with the Baptismal Service,—the Churchman, thus formed, will be the most speaking practical comment of the excellency of Baptismal privileges, and will be the most effectual supporter of that Ecclesiastical communion to which he belongs.

Again—LET THIS INTERPRETATION BE THE SUBJECT OF THE MINISTER’S PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH HIS PEOPLE.

Let him request those of his flock of the most

decided piety, to begin this renewed system of introducing their Children for Baptism, when the Congregation may be expected to be the largest; let the ceremony be of a decidedly public character; let the administration of it be conspicuous before the whole Church; let the Minister by his voice and manner challenge the attention of the Church, and doubtless his challenge will be answered. And let another and another be persuaded to follow this example, till the habit of Public Baptism is restored and established. Let the Minister also endeavour to induce the most decided Christians of his flock, voluntarily to stand forward as Sponsors to any Parent, who may be desirous of engaging their attention to his Child; let him inculcate upon them the real charity of the act, the blessedness of this labour of love, the benefit they are conferring on the Church, the life and vigour they are giving, not to the piety of one Parish alone, but to an Establishment, which, if thus animated by a living soul, would diffuse, what she proposes to do, and what she is in her institution so admirably calculated to do, spiritual life and blessing throughout the land. Were the men and women of lively piety in every Congregation, both among rich and poor, to come forward thus, and to strengthen the hands of their Minister, the administration of Baptism would be a blessed Sacrament indeed; exciting the sympathies of the Church, exercising its charity, animating its faith, and convincing it of the reality of



“the Communion of the Saints,” by its own vital experience of the blessings, which such a communion was actually producing. It might then indeed be said to every Parish from Cornwall to the Tweed, “arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” (Isaiah lx. 1.)

ANOTHER means in aid of the former, is—THE KIND AND TEMPERATE USE OF THE DISCRETION WITH RESPECT TO SPONSORS, INTRUSTED TO THE MINISTER IN THE TWENTY-NINTH CANON.

“Neither shall any person be admitted Godfather or Godmother to any child at Christening or Confirmation, before the said person so undertaking hath received the holy Communion.” I say the *kind* and *temperate* use of this discretion, for were it otherwise than kind and temperate, it would but disgust, whom it was intended to benefit and encourage. That all the parties may be known to the Minister, notice of the proposed Baptism shall be given by the Parents “over night, or in the morning before the beginning of morning prayer.” And if the latter season of notice be deemed too short by the Minister, he “by his discretion shall appoint” the Baptism, “either immediately after the last Lesson at Morning Prayer, or else immediately after the last Lesson at Evening Prayer.” Thus sufficient time is allowed to a Minister, officiating in a Parish of reasonable compass, to ascertain the character of

the Sponsors, to instruct them in the nature of the duty they are about to undertake if ignorant, or if they are either so ignorant, or so deficient in character, as to give just cause of scandal, let them be mildly advised to give place for the present, till such ignorance or scandal be corrected. Or, should the case be one where open and notorious scandal must ensue, let the Minister kindly but firmly resort to his last resource, and express his sorrow that he is compelled to appeal to the authority of the canon, and to exclude him or them from the office of Sponsor, on the ground the Church allows; that as they have not received the one Sacrament they are not deemed fit to become Sponsors in the other. I state this as the last resource of needful discipline: not to be resorted to but in a case of extremity: but like all discipline, conducted at once with firmness and kindness, were it once resorted to, and the circumstance generally known, and perhaps mentioned from the pulpit with evident regret, it might, with God's blessing, be the means of checking the presumption of ignorance and incompetency, and of inducing Parents to a more cautious selection of Sponsors to be presented to the Church. The evil of unqualified Sponsors is deep and inveterate; and, like all old diseases, it admits but of gradual cure; it is the long-suffering kindness of the Gospel combined with its firmness, that, with the blessing of the Spirit, can alone effect it.

ANOTHER most striking means of giving this

interpretation effect is—THE MINISTER'S OWN EXAMPLE IN HIS FAMILY.

Let this interpretation of Baptismal blessings pervade all the education of his children, and all his dealings with them; and let his relations, and friends, and parishioners feel, that the man believes his own doctrines, by his steady and consistent perseverance in giving them effect by his own practice. The blessedness of thus acting from faith in the promise, and assuming that his children are thus really included in the covenant of salvation, no man knows, but the man who is actually exercising this faith, and enjoying the blessing. So far is this confidence from occasioning a false security, that there will be a constant vigilance, lest any of his children "fail of the grace of God." (Hebrews xii. 15.) This father will do what he can to educate his own children; and when compelled to part with them to another, the spiritual character of the instructor will be the grand leading consideration. In such a Parent, while the infirmities of his nature are more or less putting his principles to a daily test, both with respect to himself and his child; though anger, and impatience, and lassitude, and neglect, and forgetfulness, the frequent expressions of a corrupt nature in himself, will ever be impeding his own design; and the frowardness, and obstinacy, and petulance, and corruption of childhood, will often stagger his faith, as to the real existence of grace in his child; yet there will be a constant recurrence to his

principles, an habitual resort to the promise, and a persevering pleading of it in prayer, which, under the influence of the Spirit will keep him firm to his purpose, and will not suffer his faith to fail. From what oppressive anxieties both as to the souls and bodies of our children should we be daily preserved, could we but thus, in simple faith on the promises, commit them unreservedly to God! "Lord, from thee they came; Lord, to thee they are devoted; we commit all their concerns and interests to thee both in time and eternity: thou wouldest have us to "be careful for nothing," (Phil. iv. 6.) Lord, give us grace to cast all our care upon thee, and faith to believe that thou dost indeed care for us." Happy, thrice happy are the Parents that are in such a case; blessed, thrice blessed is the family which has thus practically the Lord for its God. Let this be the character of the Minister's family, and Baptismal privileges will then appear in their true reality and loveliness, from the holy savour they diffuse on all who partake of the blessings of the house.

And could I anticipate the return of simplicity among us, I would venture to suggest ANOTHER means, which might be expected to give considerable interest to "the Communion of Saints" in carrying this interpretation into effect.—LET THE ATTENTION OF THE CHURCH BE ESPECIALLY CHALLENGED.

Suppose the Baptism were to take place in the afternoon, let the names of the Parents and Spon-

sors of the Infant or Infants proposed to be introduced into the Church, be given publicly from the desk, in the morning, and the interest of the Church be excited, and its prayers requested in favour of the parties. Good neighbourhood would here rest, not upon the interchange of a few kind offices merely, but upon the sure ground of Christian sympathy and love. I am well aware that this expansion of Christian love can distinguish Christian times alone; but I am concerned to show that the blessings of Baptism if realised in Christian practice, according to the order of our Church, would be adapted to the purest state of the Church upon earth. For what is that reign of love which we anticipate under the full display of the Gospel, but the unfailing and universal interest which man shall take in his fellow, expanding itself from the child of his dearest affections, to his family, his parish, his county, his country, till it embraces the utmost circumference of man?

ANOTHER means of carrying this interpretation into effect would be—THE IMPROVED MODE OF TREATING CHILDREN WHICH WOULD NECESSARILY RESULT FROM IT.

Shall I be tolerated in the remark, that, at present, the approach of a child is considered as a signal for a joke. It is considered as the approach of a being so evidently inferior to ourselves, that our understanding may be relaxed in its tone, and our fancy and our wit may throw off all restraint to surprise or amuse him. In the apprehension

of many, a child has as little claim to the exercise of reason, as to that of truth. But let the Child be invested in our esteem with his real character as “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” and our estimate of him will be raised. He will not then be considered merely as a play-thing, a creature to minister to our relaxation and amusement, the favourite object of our caresses and our sport; but amusement and caresses will be improved as means of elevating his mind to better things, and of leading his attention to what is useful and spiritual. Let him be treated with all the affection, tenderness, consideration, and forbearance that are due to the infirmities of the child, but with the prospective design, the attention, and discipline to form the future man, and that the man of God. This may be done, I conceive, without any forced precocity, or any premature elevation of the child into the man. Introduce but this improved mode of treating children, according to an improved estimate of their character, as indeed children of God, devoted to his service, and therefore to be educated to his praise, and you lay a broad foundation for the complete renovation of human society. Let this estimate once prevail, and in this result of our interpretation of Baptism, you have the most efficient means of giving permanency to its blessings.

Another mode of introducing this interpretation to notice is,—THE PROVISION OF NEW MEANS OF EXPLAINING IT TO CHILDREN.



Let elementary works be written for this purpose, simple and interesting, and adapted to their tender years.

First, let a new exposition of the Church Catechism be drawn up, with a plain and natural interpretation of its letter; and I apprehend that the very sense we are here endeavouring to recommend, would be the direct effect of such interpretation. The ordinary expositions of the Catechism, which I have seen, have not appeared to me to be satisfactory, on this very account: that they give not a Gospel but a legal view of its letter. They do not ground the exertions of the Child on the covenant promise of a faithful God, sealed to him in his Baptism, and investing him with his three eminent privileges; much less do they teach him, that, in virtue of such covenant, the Holy Spirit is sanctifying him as an elect of God; and that he should "heartily thank his Heavenly Father, that he hath called him to this state of salvation, and pray unto God to give him his grace that he may continue in the same" state of grace, all the days of his life, by the exercise of an unshaken faith. This seems to me to be the plain sense of the letter; and it is this defect which makes many of the expositions of the Confirmation Service which I have seen, imperfect also; that Service being intended to confirm and "strengthen" those, whom God has "vouchsafed to regenerate—by water and the Holy Ghost," and to whom he has "given forgiveness of all their sins."

To this exposition of the Catechism, may be added, a detailed exemplification of these principles of grace by short tracts illustrating their effects in the various scenes of every-day life. If "history is philosophy teaching by example," the daily circumstances of the Christian life as selected from the Scriptures, the biography of the Church of Christ, the fugitive memorials of the present Christian world, and, if judiciously executed, original tales, might give a practical view both to the cottage and the drawing-room, of the suitableness and excellency of salvation by the promise, as faith may apply it in all the ordinary occurrences of life.

To the above might be added, a manual of prayer extracted from the Baptismal Service and the Catechism, for the express use of our baptised Infants, to be taught them "so soon as they shall be able to learn," and to be put into their hands so soon as they can read. Such a book is much wanted; and if compiled with simplicity would be a most desirable aid to the nursery, both to the Child, its Mother, and Nurse. The most effectual mode of abolishing wrong practices is to introduce the right; and if such a manual were generally adopted, many a silly, not to say many a false and unscriptural prayer might be superseded by sound and appropriate petitions.<sup>1</sup> And after the Child

<sup>1</sup> If it should please God to give me ability and opportunity, I purpose to follow up the principles of these letters by a practical detail of their usefulness in a manual of prayer,

has been well grounded in the incipient formularies of our Church, let the "Articles of Religion" be studiously committed to memory : and let each of them, together with the various parts of the Liturgy be frequently and familiarly explained and confirmed by proofs from the Scriptures.

In a word let the Infant know and feel his privileges of Baptism, as he is able to comprehend and feel them : let a baptised atmosphere surround him ; and let not only the daily attentions he is receiving from his Parents convince him that he is the child of their natural affection, but let the kindly spirit of holy nurture, and baptismal blessedness convince him, that he is also a child of God, and adopted into the family of Christ.

Another means is—A FREQUENT CALL UPON THE CHURCH TO INTEREST ITSELF IN THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF THE YOUNG OF THE FLOCK.

Let it be frequently remarked from the pulpit, and in private, that the responsibilities and privi-

selected from the Baptismal and its kindred Services, for the express use of the baptised children of our Church : so that the expressions of the Services already committed to memory, may become the vehicles of prayer. This may be at once a help to the pious superintendence of the Parent and Sponsor, and to the devotions of the Child.

The author has redeemed this pledge by the publication of twelve tracts, practically carrying out a "Baptismal Education according to the services of the Established Church," under two titles : the early numbers bearing that of "Helps for the Nursery ;" the latter that of "Helps for the Young." These may be had of Messrs. Seeley, 169 Fleet Street.

leges of Baptism are confined neither to the Parents, the Sponsors, nor the Child, but that they are the common concern and property of every member of the Church. Here is a most affecting ground of appeal to the prayers, and sympathies, and exertions of the whole "Communion of Saints." Without a nursery, the family must cease: hence the Church is drawing her constant supply; hence the Church is to derive her permanency, her increase, her unceasing spread over the land and over the world. In her children is to be exhibited the Father's love, the Saviour's salvation, and the Spirit's grace. When we are gone, they are to fill our place; they are the heirs of our blessings, hereafter to grow up as "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord." (Isa. xli. 3.) Let these and similar suggestions be often advanced, and from the first introduction of the Child at Baptism, to his maturity in grace, the Church will follow him with her prayers and her blessings, and find an increase of her own strength, in every accession of spiritual strength which her charitable interest has been the means of bestowing on the Child.

Further—LET THE FONT BE RESTORED TO ITS PLACE.

Without this means, Baptism will lose the conspicuous character it holds as the initiatory Sacrament of the Church. Let the font resume the place assigned to it in the days of the Reformation. It has a station of emblematic propriety at

a convenient distance from the great West entrance of the Church; let it be restored to its honourable station: and let that station be so directly opposite to the main entrance of the building, that none from that entrance can find access to the second sacrament, but through the intervention of the first; and let no man in our Church think, he can approach “the Communion of the Saints,” in their highest exercise of that communion, the Eucharistical memorial of the Saviour’s dying love, till he has been introduced to that communion by the initiatory Sacrament, in which he has been cleansed from the guilt of sin by faith in the blood of Christ, and from the power of sin by faith in the Spirit of Christ. Thus situated, the font would act as a standing monitor to the Church. Its voice would be, “remember your promises, remember your vows, remember your privileges, remember the blessed communion to which you belong: exercise your graces, discharge your duties, enjoy your privileges, as living members of a living head.” And the Minister might point from the pulpit to the font, and tell his people that even the very stones of the font may cry out against them, if they are walking inconsistently with their profession: if they are deserting that path of the commandments in which they have promised to walk; if they are lax professors of that faith which should give vital energy to their profession; and if they are absorbed in the vanities of a world, which they have renounced;

are indulging tempers and lusts which they have abjured; and are the willing victims of Satan, against whom they have promised to array all their vigilance and all their power.

In our modern chapels, a Churchman looks in vain for any memorial of "two" Sacraments "as generally necessary to salvation:" and in too many of our churches, built or repaired since the Restoration, the font has given place to the stove in the aisle, and is degraded to some obscure station under a gallery, or to some blind corner inconvenient for any other purpose. One Sacrament alone seems to the eye to be necessary, and to have engrossed all our attention. But if we remove it from the eye, we remove it also from observation and memory. No memorial is sister to oblivion. If we would give the Sacrament due honour, and attract to it proportionate esteem, let the font resume its station of conspicuous dignity, and challenge what it deserves, the attention of all. There let the Child be openly admitted to his initiatory communion with the Church; and "in the Baptism of Infants," let "every man present be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism."

But it is evident, My Dear Friend, that in order to set these wheels in motion, as means of producing and maintaining the blessings consequent on our interpretation of Baptism, those doctrines of grace must be restored to us, in which this interpretation originated, and by the practical bless-



edness of which it was in its present mode bestowed on our Church. This gracious system of Baptismal regeneration was transmitted to us by our Reformers, as a rich blessing to give permanency and consistency to "the Communion of the Saints" from generation to generation. It seems then to be an indispensable means of effecting their purpose, that those sentiments of grace, and those views of the Gospel, which they held and taught, should be presented distinctly and openly to the Church; that the works of the Reformers, still extant, should be republished in their most accessible forms; and that the attention of the whole British Public from the highest to the lowest, from the most learned to the most ignorant, should be solicited to these almost sacred records, as the soundest interpreters of all the formularies of our Church.

As a further mode then—LET THE WORKS OF THE REFORMERS BE PREST ON THE ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC.

With respect to the works of the Reformers, we have, in these days of reform, neither done justice to them nor to ourselves. Almost as many volumes have been expended, in discussing what their sentiments were, as would have conveyed the works of the original Reformers to the Public, and have afforded us the best opportunity of judging for ourselves. But unless these works are reprinted, it is evident that every day is depriving us of this opportunity more and more. Fox's

Book of Martyrs has nearly disappeared from our churches : Bishop Jewell's Defence of his Apology in answer to Harding, a massive folio, constituting a body of divinity, (the only copy of which exhibited for public perusal that I ever saw, was some years since in a church at Wells,) is dispersed into private libraries or has submitted to the same fate. Many of their writings have been destroyed by those who were ignorant of their value, and have in many instances been considered and treated as mere waste paper. It is true, some attempts have been made of late to renew our recollection of the principles of our forefathers, one especially, "the Fathers of the English Church," in eight octavo volumes : but this work, select and interesting as it is, it is said, found its way so slowly to public acceptance, that for some years not more than four hundred copies were sold ; and the remaining six hundred were disposed of by the efforts of those, who either as friends of the Editor, or of his labours, were unwilling that such an attempt should meet with no better reward than failure. But whatever attempt of this kind has been made, successful or otherwise, it is but too evident, that the Public have no adequate means of judging of the sentiments of the Reformers, on account of the scarcity of their works.

To remedy this defect then, I would propose that a Society should be instituted, called, "The Reformers Restored, or, the Society for reprinting the works of the Reformers." An associated

effort, by the blessing of God, may effect that, to which individual exertion is unequal. Its capital and its numbers will at once afford notoriety to the attempt, sufficient means of effecting it, and security for its honest performance.

As a general hint as to the mode in which such a Society might accomplish its purpose, I would propose that it should edit works of three classes. First generally, both in volumes and tracts, the works of the Reformers throughout the sixteenth century, limiting their first publication to those of the "Marian days," and their immediate predecessors; then such works as are written in the spirit and sentiment of the Reformers till the sun of free grace sunk in our Ecclesiastical horizon with Carleton, Davenant,<sup>1</sup> and Hall. This latter selection to be left to the discretion of the managers. The second class should consist, of either the *Corpus Confessionum*, with a translation, or a harmony of the Confessions, either after the example of that printed at Cambridge 1586; or of a more brief and condensed kind, showing, at one

<sup>1</sup> As an instance of the waning state of the doctrines of grace in the time of Davenant, I would refer to the reception of his well-known sermon preached before King Charles the First; on account of which he was called before the Privy Council, and as Fuller says with his truly characteristic quaintness, "presented himself on his knees, and so had still continued for any favour he found from any of his own function there present." See the particulars of the sermon and the Bishop's treatment on account of it in Fuller's *Church History*, xi. 138.

view, the concurring sentiments of all the Churches of the Reformation on every article of faith—a species of evidence much wanted at this day, as it is with us after the Scriptures the most conclusive. The third class might be simply historical, consisting either of whole works, or of extracts more immediately relating to the times of the Reformation: these might consist of extracts either of original authors of our own, such as Fox and Holinshed, &c. or of foreign historians such as Sleidan, or of historians whose works are compiled from these, such as Burnet's History of the Reformation, and the lives of the principal Reformers by Strype, &c. Thus the whole of the Reformation in its spirit, principles, and agents, might be presented to the Public, and from these ample documents, every man might judge for himself, what was the religion of our forefathers, and what that religion was which they intended to transmit to us.<sup>1</sup>

As to the management of the Society, it is evident, that to give it fair operation, it must be under the direction of those who approve of the

<sup>1</sup> One powerful mode of recommending the principles of the Reformation to general notice, would be the introduction of the Fifth Book of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity as a class book into our Universities. It contains in fact a body of sterling divinity, peculiarly adapted to members of our Established Church, and might well supersede some works of inferior merit which at present occupy the attention of our youth.

sentiments of the Reformers, and who will perseveringly present them to the public as their guides after the Scriptures of God. The management of it should be exclusively vested in a few, by whom a joint capital should be contributed; while the benefits of the Society should be universal; extending to every annual subscriber of a guinea or more such advantages from diminished price, and facility of attainment, as would not only encourage the admirers of the piety of the Reformers, but the curious, the learned, the antiquary, and the man of taste to afford their support. The grand object should be the Restoration of the Reformers to the notice of the British Public: men's motives are their own: and while the Institution is especially intended for the good of the Church, its success must depend on the blessing of God in overruling the various motives which actuate human conduct to the support of his own cause.

Let the works of the Reformers then, be offered to the Public, in every variety of form in which they may attract the eye from the palace to the cottage. Let a well-printed legible volume be the ordinary channel of communication; which, by being constantly renewed in a good type and a low price, may offer itself to the shelf of the collector, or may form the manual of the divine; and let the most popular, and most interesting portions of these works, be printed as cheap tracts, to be dispersed over the country. A large portion of

Fox's Book of Martyrs—that which forms the history of the Church during the sixteenth century, and the years immediately preceding, might be printed as one folio volume, to be had either in the volume, or in numbers to be circulated by the hawkers; and it might again court public attention by being placed with the Book of Homilies in our Churches. Here would be a library for the divine, and supply the most approved comment both on the Scriptures and on the Liturgy of our Church. We should then be spared that worse than useless vanity of reading a number of unsatisfactory books;<sup>1</sup> a sound religious taste would be induced, the best days of the Church would be renewed, and Popery, and Infidelity, and Semi-Pelagianism, and Semi-Gospelism would yield to “the truth” as it “is in Jesus.” (Eph. iv. 21.) The darkness of error being once dispersed by this recurrence to first principles, the light of divine illumination might under God be thus maintained in our Church; and by superseding controversy

<sup>1</sup> It is indeed a worse than useless vanity, to consume life in reading an almost endless variety of books. How often is it the business of the latter part of life, to correct the false sentiments we have been acquiring during the former part of it! I know not that a man of sound wisdom and piety, (and he must eminently possess both as needful qualifications for such a work) could confer a richer blessing on the world than either to condense the most approved books within a small compass, or to arrange the most approved authors on the various subjects of human knowledge in a compendious and intelligible syllabus.



(for our sainted Fathers of the Reformation are happily both above the condition and provocation of controversy) their respected remains might tend to unite us their children in the bonds of Christian harmony and love.

Excuse these few hints, dropped incidentally on a subject which well deserves more ample consideration. If I have a wish fraught with blessings to our Church, the accomplishment of which would gratify me more than another it is, I own, to see the works of the Reformers in every hand; but especially in the hands of us, who succeed them in the ministry of that Church, which they reformed by their wisdom and piety, and established by their constancy, their sufferings, and their blood. We should thus be saved from the errors and delusions of more modern times, and from the floating non-descript divinity, which the fashion of each generation subsequent to the times of the Reformers has dictated to its respective day. And I do trust, that the time is not very distant, when the institution of such a Society may be announced to the Public, and the Reformers receive that practical testimony of favour and acceptance, which all parties in the Church acknowledge to be their due.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Twelve years nearly have elapsed since the above was written, and I am sorry that I cannot announce the establishment of such a Society as that proposed above: but single works of the Reformers have been edited; such as Fox's "Acts and Monuments;" Coverdale's "Letters of

ANOTHER means of giving effect to the above interpretation in this our day, is—THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERIODICAL WORK WHICH SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE SENTIMENTS OF THE REFORMERS.

The tone of the Gospel as they preached, and defined, and felt, and lived it, should be that which the Editors of this work should pre-eminently recommend, and to which, as the true standard, they should seek to elevate the Christian literature of our times. I am not aware that any work of this character at present exists among us. Lives of the Reformers, and references to their times and sentiments and sufferings, are often given and alluded to; but I know not any Periodical Work that professes to give the truths of Christianity according to the standard of the Reformation. Indeed I must plainly say, that this defect in the Periodical Works with which I am acquainted, forms no small evil of the day. They are received as accredited exhibitions of the true Gospel, and are appealed to frequently as standards of sound divinity; but if the divinity of the Reformation be sound divinity; and if the statement of the Gospel as laid down in the Seventeenth Article be sound divinity, I must confess that I meet with the tone and spirit of this divinity, as their prominent and distinguishing character in—shall I say the Martyrs;” Jewell’s “Defence of his Apology;” Nowell’s Catechism, &c. and 12 volumes of the works of the Reformers by the Religious Tract Society.

any of these works that I have yet seen? adequately perhaps in none. I admit to the fullest extent the usefulness of many of them in attracting attention to the subject of religion, in imparting a variety of religious knowledge and information, and in recommending to public attention the politico-religious subjects of the day; and generally, in forming a rallying point for the religious world, they have been eminently useful, and God has doubtless blessed their efforts to the spread of religious truth. But in vain have I looked for the sweet, and racy, and lovely Gospel of our forefathers; those gales from Eden, which refresh and invigorate the soul of a helpless sinner groaning under the manifold infirmities and corruptions of his fallen nature, and needing daily supplies from that Gospel of spiritual life, which is a daily "revelation from faith to faith." (Rom. i. 17.) Indeed one letter of Bradford's will often contain more of the spiritual elixir of the genuine Gospel, than many pages, perhaps scores of pages of most of these works, some of which indeed are decidedly opposed to his tone of religion: and others of which, by their silence at least, seem to consider it as excessive, if not enthusiastic.

Such a work, to be useful, should itself strikingly illustrate the blessedness of the principles it undertakes to recommend. There should be if possible, no controversy,<sup>1</sup> much less flippancy; no

<sup>1</sup> The characteristic excellence of the work,—the bringing forward in their own words the sentiments of the Reformers

party spirit or littleness of a junta, but every book that comes up to the standard of the Gospel, as exhibited by our Church in the Seventeenth Article, and its corresponding formularies throughout the Liturgy, should be fairly admitted to its due claim to the notice of the Public. Let the great principle of the Gospel, as taught throughout by our Church—*salvation by mercy in its origin, means, and end*, be the test of those authors it recommends. Let other books pass by unnoticed; for it is surely a most unhappy effect of the too indiscriminate notice of authors, to advertise the very works which the critic condemns, and to which even critical condemnation gives a pernicious celebrity. Let such works never be mentioned, unless under circumstances of such glaring notoriety as will amply justify such mention. Let all books of equivocal character be passed by: and even books written purposely to controvert the principles of the work, receive no other answer, than the plain and full elucidation of the verity and excellence of those principles which the pages of the work perseveringly exhibit. Let it be its studious design to avoid every thing like collision, and to display the spirit of its doctrines by its practice. Let it breathe the love, the peace, the joy, the blessing of God's richest gift to man; let its spirit be love, and its practice love; and in the—would go far to preclude controversy: it would be constantly supplying genuine documents by which every man might be able to judge for himself.

wide waste of human errors and prejudices, let the truth and the spirit of Christianity, as illustrated by our Church, afford in this work one distinguished spot, where truth and moderation meet together, and where kindness and love have convinced the heart of its error, before the pride of the understanding has arisen to its defence. Let a well-selected history of the lives, and sentiments, and sayings of the Reformers, both native and foreign, be continually brought forward, together with the most striking extracts from their works; and let those authors of all times, subsequent or anterior, who have held similar sentiments, afford a continual illustration and recommendation of them. Let such authors of the present day as entertain these principles, receive ample encouragement to proceed in giving them in every way to the public: and let it be a work which the Holy Spirit may own in its design, execution, and temper; to which the weary soul may resort for refreshment, and the wounded heart for consolation; and in which the believer may meet a kindred spirit, to dissolve his doubts, to dissipate his fears, to assuage his sorrows, to excite his graces, to confirm his faith, and to elevate his hope.

But you will say, where are the conductors of such a work to be found? I have no doubt, that there are, in our Church, those who are capable both in piety, acquirement, and talent, of conducting such a publication: that there are many who desire it, I well know; and that it would find the

most ample encouragement and support I entertain no doubt. May God, of his mercy, grant, that this hint, as well as the former, may not be lost ; may it be the means of awakening the attention of those who are competent to the work, and may the principles enforced in these letters form a point of union, and a bond of security, from which such a publication may emanate, and by which it may be maintained in asserting the sovereignty of grace, and the simplicity of the Gospel.

But there yet remains ONE MEANS, and that the most powerful of all, even that which is “ the power of God ” (1 Cor. i. 18.) unto salvation,—THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL,—even of that Gospel which formed the paramount subject of his ministry, who in the discharge of it “ determined to know nothing—but Jesus Christ, and him crucified : ” (1 Cor. ii. 2.) and which, if I have ever yet been privileged to comprehend its letter, or to feel its spirit, is the genuine Gospel of our Established Church.

It is quite clear that no style of preaching can give effect to the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service, and its kindred formularies, which does not represent the Gospel in the same lovely point of view, and exhibit it as a rich provision of privileges, given for the express purpose of restoring a helpless sinner to the favour, and of investing him again with the holy image of his God, that hereafter he may be a partaker of his glory.

Can the preaching of mere morality effect this ?



Will the telling the sinner to sin no more, on account of the evil consequences that will attend the commission of his sins, both here and hereafter, bring that helpless sinner to the cross of Christ for the pardon of his sins, or to the throne of Christ for the conquest of them ?

Can the preaching of the medley-Gospel effect this ? Will the conviction that man can do his part from his own native goodness and power, and that Christ can and will make up the deficiency for him, humble the sinner in the dust, at the foot of the cross or throne of Christ, and honour the Saviour for having privileged him with a salvation, which he will allow at most to be only partial,—a half-measure,—and which as Bishop Hall expresses it, “ parts stakes with Christ ? ”

Will the preaching of the Law, with all its holiness and all its terrors, even under the teaching of the Spirit, effect this ? It may generate “ a spirit of bondage to fear,” but it never can animate us with a sense of privilege, and cause us to receive “ the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father,” (Rom. viii. 15.) and prayer becomes a blessing and a pleasure. To preach the Law is not to preach the Gospel ; nor can it ever give us a sense of “ the kindness and love of God our Saviour.” (Titus iii. 3.) It is mistaking the vestibule of the palace for the presence chamber of the prince : the one may lead to the other, but they must by no means be mistaken for the same.

Neither will that Gospel which consists in preaching the three fundamental doctrines of Christianity answer our purpose, or come up to the spiritual standard of our Church: I mean—the ruin of man by the fall—the recovery of man by the Saviour—and the regeneration of man by the Spirit. These are indeed great and leading portions of the Gospel; but they are but portions: they are not the whole counsel of God's mercy to man. They are indeed some of the most brilliant gems of the crown: but if they are presented to us isolated and alone, they are displaced from the setting, and lose their peculiar beauty, by losing their harmony and proportion. Thus detached from their sister privileges, they mourn their loss, from their own incapacity to build up the saint, and to admit him into the liberty of adoption. Such a ministry converts under the blessing of the Spirit, and usually improves conversion into a growing sanctification; but the growth is slow, because the beams of that free grace which enliven and invigorate are wanting; and the subject of this ministry does not usually arise above the misty regions of doubt and fear, to those of privilege and assurance. These upper regions of celestial day, the happy temperature of our blessed Church, are too frequently esteemed by such, a *Terra Incognita*, which it is presumption to explore: and “make thy chosen people joyful” to the benefits of which such Christians have an undoubted claim, is, in their

mouths, not a prayer for themselves, but for others, in whom it is almost presumption, in their esteem, to accept the blessings which this prayer has drawn down upon them. It is thus, I conceive, that in the Evangelical world the growth of sanctification is dwarfed; and even the pious members of our Church, who have a clear right to all its privileges, and all its blessings, come short of their birthright, and of the peculiar benefits of a communion which would mature them "to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ," as to cause them to walk in the daily assurance, that they have a personal interest in the graces and glories of his salvation. Not esteeming themselves to be saints, they think they have no right to the communion: and though they are constantly holding communion with the Church, in the exercise of the same means of grace; yet a large portion of the sympathies and privileges of that communion is lost both to themselves and the Church, from their doubt, whether such sympathies and privileges do indeed belong to them. And it is by the fears and apprehensions of these excellent but timid believers that the Church is bereaved of the chief comfort of her children.

Neither do I conceive that the most accurate statement, and most finished definition of the Gospel laid down in our Seventeenth Article, preached *didactically*,<sup>1</sup> is that preaching of the

<sup>1</sup> To preach election merely didactically, is not, I ap-

Gospel which can carry the above interpretation into practice. Those great and glorious truths which constitute the Gospel mode of salvation may be detailed with perfect accuracy, and most correct proportion as a dry system of truth. There may be nothing to complain of in the statement; but the complaint will be of the absence of that unction, and feeling, and experience which, under the power of the Spirit, give that statement effect. A system of truth dryly and didactically exhibited, may be as inoperative in practice as a system of error: both may equally amuse or instruct the understanding, but neither of them may sink into the heart. The apprehensive faculty of a real believer is described as

prehend, according to the Scripture manner; and must necessarily be offensive both to the head and heart of unconverted man. The faith of the one, and the humility of the other, are indispensable recipients of this doctrine of mere mercy. The pride of intellect must submit, that the understanding should receive that which intellect cannot comprehend; and the arrogance of self-sufficiency must yield the heart to accept that which flows from sovereign mercy alone. Perhaps the most splendid passage in Scripture [Rom. viii. 28, 29] is that in which the doctrine of election is exhibited most fully, explicitly, and particularly. And what passage of Scripture is so abundant in love, and joy, and hope, and privilege, and victory, and triumph? It is a challenge to every noble feeling of the soul to rejoice in the excellence, the security, and the blessedness of the love of God in Christ Jesus; and that feeling can only be expressed in the rapturous language of the Bride "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm." (Song of Sol. viii. 6.)

“ an understanding heart ; ” it is “ with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness ; ” (Rom. x. 10.) and it is the full heart of the preacher of the Gospel, teeming with all its rich and purifying righteousness, and illustrating the love, the joy, the peace, and the hope of the Gospel in his own spirit and ministry, that can best exhibit its heavenly tendency, and under the power of the Spirit flash self-condemnation on the conscience of the convicted sinner, while it pours the balm of peace and assurance into the troubled soul.

To preach the Gospel then according to the Scriptures, the Liturgy of our Church, and the example of our Reformers, is, I apprehend, to pour out its blessings,—its graces, duties and privileges—with a holy unction, from a heart deeply imbued with a sense of those blessings. It is doctrine illustrated by feeling, precept by practice, the letter by the spirit, the manifold word in all its experimental reality of suitability and loveliness. It is faith in the promise acted out in unreserved confidence in its fidelity and truth. It is the love of the Father commended in the gift of the Son—the grace of the Son commended in the constant application and daily use of him in his person and offices—the communion of the Spirit, the divine applicant of the grace of the Son to the human soul, commended in the fellowship with which he actually enfeoffs the believer both with the Father and the Son, and with the whole Church militant and

triumphant. It is not a grace, or a duty, or a privilege drawn out into scholastic divisions and subdivisions to amuse the understanding, but all of them harmoniously interwoven with each other, the two former deriving confirmation and practicability from the felt enjoyment of the latter. It is salvation, presented as a rich and abundant gift in all its gracious and intelligible detail, from its rise in the bosom of God as the counsel of his will towards the redeemed soul, to its crowning consummation in glory; and all this distinguished blessedness conveyed in experimental vitality from the heart of the preacher to the heart of the hearer.

Such, I conceive, is the Gospel of the kingdom as delineated in the Scriptures. It is no detraction either from the Old Testament, or from the ministry of our Lord, as exhibited in the four Gospels, to say, that the preaching of the Gospel was most perfect when the Gospel itself was most perfect. Now the dispensation of the Gospel was not perfect, till the Saviour had ascended on high, "spoiled principalities and powers," (Col. ii. 15.) assumed his station on the right hand of his Father's glory, had received the gifts of the Spirit for men, and had actually exercised his prerogative as the King of his Church, by accomplishing the great promise of the Gospel, the gift of the Holy Ghost, to the primitive converts of the new dispensation of grace. John the Baptist, though "much more than a Prophet" (Luke vii. 8.) as the



forerunner of the Saviour, yet, great as he was, as he was only the forerunner of the kingdom, was inferior to the least in the kingdom of heaven when actually established. The most perfect exhibition of grace then, whether in its letter, spirit, or preaching, is afforded to the Church in the Acts and writings of the Apostles. And who, that is well conversant with these, has not felt the sweet infusion of grace pervading all calls to duty, and that duty is made practicable from faith in his promise "who maketh us to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.) If *doctrines* are to be insisted on, they are recommended experimentally; whether it be the total corruption of our nature, our complete salvation by grace, our justification by faith in the blood of Christ, our sanctification, our privileges, our election in Christ, as is evident from the most logical statement of them to be found in Scripture, from the first to the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. If *duties* are to be enforced, we have not a whole chapter drawn out into scholastic niceties of detail; but we have them in the mass, as the rich combined expression of the Christian character, mixed up with Gospel motives and encouragements, the bright truths of mercy and grace, sparkling like diamonds here and there, and the loved name of Jesus sanctifying the call to duty throughout, making effort hopeful, and our sanctification our highest pleasure. This is strikingly evidenced in the conclusion of the Epistle above referred to,

from the twelfth chapter to the end. If a *grace* is to be pourtrayed, a few masterly touches of characteristic excellence are given, such as that of charity, (1 Cor. xiii.) ever grounding us on faith, and reminding us that it is charity as it is the result of the faith and hope of the Gospel. Christ is the soul of *duty*, of *grace*, of *privilege*. Christ is the light and warmth which cheer and animate to exertion. It is the promise and not the precept, it is encouragement and not exaction, it is grace and not nature which consecrate a course of moral beauty and blessing, and convince the believer that whether grace is to be exercised, or duty discharged, he is eminently "God's workmanship"—"the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 24.

Such also is the Gospel of our Church, as preached in "The Article"<sup>1</sup> and Liturgy. The Seventeenth Article is an exquisite and most accomplished description of the whole Gospel. It originates in the love of the Father regarding fallen man in the perfection of the Son, and applying this love in experimental efficacy to the soul of man by the agency of the Holy Ghost. "The Article" grounds all its blessings to the sinner on God's free election of him to everlasting glory in Christ; and on this foundation applied to the individual as "endued with so excellent a

<sup>1</sup> See His Majesty's Declaration prefixed to the Articles, clause the sixth.

benefit of God," all the blessings of the Gospel are raised. The whole Gospel according to "The Article," is but an illustration of God's electing love. The calling of the sinner, his conversion in obedience to the call, his justification, his adoption, his sanctification, his religious walk and final glory, that is, all these particulars which constitute the Gospel (for this is the Gospel) are consecutive benefits necessarily flowing out of that original benefit;—the sinner's being marked out as the object of God's distinguishing mercy in Christ Jesus. If you detach them from their consecutive station you spoil their harmony, their beauty, and their efficacy; if you join sanctification immediately with justification, and pass over the highly privileged link of adoption, as is too commonly done in stating the Gospel, you lose the great animating motive to sanctification, this rich expression of the free favour and sovereign mercy of God. It is thus with the whole cluster of doctrines here stated as constituting the Gospel; you cannot remove one without marring the harmony of the whole. Displace but one, and you break the continuity of the stream which originates in the fountain of God's eternal election, and flows on with increasing abundance of blessings to its confluence in the ocean of everlasting glory. Electing love is here the *origin* of salvation, electing grace in all its rich variety is the *means*, electing glory is the *end*. And nothing short of this, according to this statement of our

Church, is the full and real gospel of Christ Jesus. It is eminently the exhibition and application of **ELECTING LOVE**.

And here I am concerned to show the admirable consistency of our Church with the word of God on which she is built. There is not one of these links of blessing which is not a necessary part of electing wisdom in the process of our salvation; so that if this doctrine be omitted in our ministry, salvation by free grace seems to lose its very spirit and soul. Our **CALLING** is the process of election,—“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” (2 Tim. i. 9.) Our **OBEDIENCE TO THE CALL** is the process of election,—“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter i. 2.) Our **FREE JUSTIFICATION** is the process of election;—“moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified.” (Rom. viii. 30.) Our **ADOPTION** is the process of election—“having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” (Ephes. i. 5.) Our **SANCTIFICATION** or being made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, is the process of election, for—“whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate

to be conformed to the image of his Son." (Rom. viii. 29.) Our RELIGIOUS WALK in good works is the process of election,—“for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained,” or prepared, “that we should walk in them.” (Eph. ii. 10.) Our FINAL GLORY is the desirable end in which this process of election terminates: it is the concluding link of the chain—“whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. viii. 30.)

The above, I conceive, to be a most lucid statement of “the Gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts xx. 24.) according to the order of “the Article” confirmed by the word of Scripture. It is the process of God’s mercy from its origin to its consummation. It is the full and compendious developement of “all the counsel of God” (Acts xx. 27.) in the Gospel. To preach systematically or habitually detached portions of this harmonious whole, is by omission to mar the Gospel; and to preach any particular, but as pre-supposing the grand pervading and originating doctrine of electing mercy, is to misrepresent, by not illustrating that grace of which it is only a part: it is not “the whole truth.” Certain portions may be preached, and conversion may be the effect: but that richer style of sanctification, which is itself the blessed result of all this succession of privilege, is inseparably connected with it, as it is the necessary result of it. It is to restore the image of God, as presented to us in Christ, to the human

soul, that all this train of mercy is provided : and this is a preparation for glory. And as the soul grows in its apprehensions of redeeming mercy, so does it expand in love to God and man, so does sin lose its dominion, and so is grace enthroned triumphant.

The principle of this Gospel then is,—not “ we love him first, and then he loves us ; ” but “ we love him because he first loved us : ” (1 John iv. 19.) not the love of man purchasing the love of God, but the love of God to us inducing our love to him. And this I apprehend is the Gospel as wrought out in all its vital detail in the Liturgy and formularies of our Church. God’s chosen people are the persons for whom it is intended. They are elected according to the promise as the children of believing Parents ; they are united in Baptism to “ the Communion of the Saints ” when the Church prays that they may “ ever *remain* in the number of ” God’s “ faithful and elect children ; ” they are taught that the Holy Ghost “ sanctifieth ” or is sanctifying them “ and all the elect people of God ; ” they are, as I have shown in the course of these pages, continually recognised, throughout the Liturgy and its formularies, as lively members of a spiritual communion ; and in the last affecting expression of our regard that we can afford them in this world, “ we give hearty thanks ” to the Father of mercies, “ for that it hath pleased him to deliver this our Brother out of the miseries of this sinful world ; ” and we add, “ beseeching thee, that it



may please thee of thy gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect and to hasten thy kingdom." All the privileges of the Gospel, as stated in "The Article," are vitally and experimentally interwoven throughout the Liturgy; so that the man who really does accompany the words of the Liturgy as they fall from the lips of the Minister with corresponding feelings in his soul, enjoys the "true and lively word" of the Gospel in all its spiritual blessedness; and being a living member of Christ's mystical body "is neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter i. 8.)

Would you have all the pulpits of the Establishment then to sound forth the doctrine of election? I would answer this question by referring to the practice of the Reformers. When the Church was reduced to a low condition, they adapted their means of revival to the capability of the patient. They abated not one iota of its blessedness, in stating all the rich privileges of the Gospel, in that formulary which was to define those blessings, in as full and accurate a manner, as human language was capable of conveying them to the understanding. This they have done in the Seventeenth Article, which was to be a standing model of the privileges of the Gospel, presented as a continual memorial to the Church. The same privileges which they defined in "The Article," they so interwove throughout the whole Service of the Church, that they formed the very

essence of her worship. Open the Liturgy where you will, turn to whatever formulary you please, and it is a Service for an elect soul; it is the confession, prayer, intercession, praise, and rejoicing of a child of God, and of a real disciple of Jesus Christ. It is a Service which an unspiritual mouth may utter, but it is one which a spiritual soul can alone enjoy. Nor have the Reformers, in this respect, withheld one iota of what they deemed the truth as it is in Jesus; they have displayed the integrity of the Gospel, the whole counsel of God, in experimental life and energy, in the letter of the Liturgy: and they have left it like the letter of Scripture to be applied individually, as each particular worshipper is endued with grace to receive it. They have acted otherwise as to the preaching of the Gospel in the Homilies.<sup>1</sup> There they have accommodated their statement to what the then condition of the Church seemed to require. The Reformed Church was only in her infancy; both Ministers and people, as the Homilies and cotemporary accounts abundantly testify, were reduced to a low state both of knowledge and practice. They had recently come out of darkness into light; and though some enjoyed that light with a vitality perhaps now unknown; yet the

<sup>1</sup> If the institution of "The Prayer book and Homily Society," had been productive of no other advantage than that of introducing the Homilies to the notice both of rich and poor, this alone would have given it ample claim to the support and gratitude of our United Church.

great mass of the people required an initiatory instruction, by which they might be gradually led to the apprehension of the whole truth. Hence the thirty-fifth Article declares the Homilies to “contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times.” The times demanded no higher statement; and it was prudent to give them what they could bear. The very same Homilies, and sermons of the same standard of doctrine, are equally necessary at these times. Let this statement of doctrines then be made, but only as preparatory to a fuller display of the Gospel. Let it be considered as an initiatory administration of the word, to be carried forward to perfection.<sup>1</sup> If we aim at nothing beyond the

<sup>1</sup> I apprehend not only from the expression “necessary for these times” in the Thirty-fifth Article, but also by the internal evidence afforded by the Homilies themselves, that a fuller display of the doctrines of grace was meditated when the Church should be prepared for it. The doctrine of election is by no means excluded from them, as a poison to be avoided, as it is from the fashionable divinity of our day; but “the sweet savouriness” of it, is admitted occasionally into these elementary addresses as a taste of the richer statement of Gospel blessings for which they were preparing the Church, as may be seen by consulting the following Homilies:—on Prayer, part three—on the Nativity—on the Passion—on Whitsunday; and more at large, speaking of “the undoubted children of God appointed to everlasting life,” the Homily of Alms-deeds, part two continues—“And so, as by their wickedness and ungodly living, they shewed themselves according to the judgment of men, which follow the outward appearance, to be repro-

standard of the Homilies, I apprehend our people will never receive the Gospel in all the vital extent of privilege, in which it is defined in the Seventeenth Article, and represented in all its varied detail in the Liturgy. If as Ministers of the Establishment we are “never” to “cease” our “labour,” our “care and diligence, until” we “have done all that lieth in” us, “according to” our “bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to” our “charge unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among” us, “either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life ;”<sup>1</sup> it is quite clear that this high standard of spiritual growth can never be attained, but under the warm beams of a ministry, that insists on holiness as the highest happiness, and uniformly animates its subjects to increasing spirituality, by

bates and castaways ; so now by their obedience unto God’s holy will, and by their mercifulness and tender pity, wherein they shew themselves to be like unto God, who is the fountain and spring of all mercy, they declare openly and manifestly unto the sight of men, that they are the sons of God, and elect of him unto salvation. For as the good fruit is not the cause that the tree is good, but the tree must first be good before it can bring forth good fruit ; so the good deeds of man are not the cause that maketh man good, but he is first made good by the Spirit and grace of God, that effectually worketh in him and afterwards bringeth forth good fruit.”

<sup>1</sup> Ordering of Priests.

a constant display of free grace, and sovereign mercy, and electing love; a ministry that draws all its motives from the love of God in Christ, and urges the soul to an imitation of his example, from the sweet peace it derives from the satisfaction of his blood, and the power of holiness that is maintained by the influence of his Spirit. That "ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ," which leaves "no place for error in religion, or viciousness in life," can only arise from the enjoyment of all the privileges to which we are entitled in Christ, even "that he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Ephes. i. 4.) I would answer the question, therefore, by saying, It will be a happy day for the Church of England when all her Ministers aim to give her Baptismal Service and its sister formularies their full effect, by bringing their people to "a ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ;" when, like the Reformers, they give them those fundamental doctrines which are necessary for the times, with the view of leading them on to the perfection of that most accomplished Christian communion to which our Church in consistency with Scripture aims to elevate her children. "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." (Col. ii. 2.)

Such I apprehend to be the matter and order

of the real Gospel of Christ as represented in the Scripture, and by our Church in her Seventeenth Article and in her Liturgy; and I subjoin an instance of the mode in which it was both stated and preached by one of the brightest luminaries of that epoch. “Here cometh necessarily in a new way unto salvation, so that they which were in the other perverse, may in this be found straight and righteous. *That* the way of *nature*, *this* the way of *grace*. The end of *that* way salvation merited, pre-supposing the righteousness of men’s works—their righteousness, a natural ability to do them—that ability the goodness of God, which created them in such perfections. But the end of *this* way salvation bestowed upon men as a *gift*, pre-supposing not their righteousness, but the forgiveness of their unrighteousness, justification—their justification not their natural ability to do good but their hearty sorrow for their not doing, and unfeigned belief in him, for whose sake not-doers are accepted, which is their vocation—their vocation, the election of God, taking them out from the number of lost children—their election a Mediator in whom to be elect, this mediation inexplicable mercy—his mercy, their misery for whom he vouchsafed to make himself a mediator. The want of exact distinguishing between these two ways, and observing what they have common, what peculiar, hath been the cause of the greatest part of that confusion whereof Christianity at this day laboureth.” This masterly statement ex-



tracted from his "Learned sermon on the nature of pride," Hooker insists on throughout his sermons in a less formal and didactic manner. But this was the Gospel of the Reformation; and it is, I apprehend, the preaching of this Gospel, in its real extent and spirit, that can alone make our Baptismal Service intelligible or acceptable. Let salvation be of grace from beginning to end, and it will be seen, that the faith which begins in the promise, is maintained by the promise, and is crowned by the promise, shall never fail of holiness here or of full salvation hereafter. Such is the real condition, and practical blessedness of a soul introduced and educated according to the Baptismal privileges of our Church: it is the Gospel in vigorous exercise, mercy preparing a soul for glory.

It is surely one of the master-strokes of policy in our great enemy the devil, to draw off our attention from the plain and simple Gospel of grace as presented to us in the Seventeenth Article and Liturgy of our Church, and to place before us some other standard. He distracts that he may confound; and divides that he may destroy. For more than two centuries, the devil has employed the Church of England in fighting for a shadow, for the very purpose of distracting her attention from the simple truth. The names of two men, as heads of opposing parties, have occupied those lips and pens, which should have been engaged in setting forth, not the Gospel of

Calvin or Arminius, but the plain letter of the Gospel of our Church, as expressed in her Seventeenth Article. What have you and I, My dear Friend, as Clergymen of the Church of England, to do with Calvin or Arminius? We have not subscribed the tenets of either of these men, as the standard of the Gospel, but those of the Seventeenth Article of our Church. Let both of them have the respect which may be their due; and as an individual, I may prefer the divinity of the Pastor of Geneva, to that of the Professor of Leyden, or the contrary. But I cannot defend the sentiments of either the one or the other, as though such sentiments were identified with the Gospel of the Church of England. I account this to be one of the devil's chief artifices to draw us off from the real Gospel as held by our Church. Our Gospel is neither that of Calvin<sup>1</sup> nor Arminius: it stands without names as the Gospel of the Reformation—majestic in

<sup>1</sup> There are few persons in history to whom their cotemporaries have done more ample justice than Calvin; and there are few from whose labours posterity might have received greater advantages, while it has perverted his name to father the grossest enormities in sentiment and practice; and visited on him the consequences of these perversions for which he is by no means responsible. I believe there are few at the present day, who will read Calvin for themselves, that will not be astonished at the difference, between the real person and the portrait which prejudice has drawn of him. I have heard it remarked, after such a perusal, that Calvin himself was a poor Calvinist.

its own Scriptural simplicity. May God of his infinite mercy have pity on our distracted state, and cure us of this folly; may he open our eyes to this artifice of Satan; may every pulpit sound with the plain letter of "The Article;" may "all <sup>1</sup> further curious search be laid aside, and these disputes shut up in God's promises, as they be generally set forth to us in the Holy Scriptures, and the general meaning of the Articles of the Church of England according to them." All I desire is, that "no man hereafter shall either print or preach, to draw THE ARTICLE aside *any way*, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof." Let every Minister of the Church but preach the plain letter of THE ARTICLE, (that is the Seventeenth) and give it its "literal and grammatical sense:" and I have no fear for the spread of the real Gospel. He may call himself by whatever name he pleases, and men may call him by the same: only let him "give the sense" of the letter as Ezra and his brother expositors did, and I have no fear for the result. But alas! the letter is banished from among us, men's names are substituted for it, and if we withhold the letter how can we "give the sense?" (Neh. viii. 8.)

And as the above is the *tone* of Gospel preaching, which, I conceive, can alone originate and maintain that "Communion of Saints," which

<sup>1</sup> See His Majesty's Declaration prefixed to the Articles.

our Church contemplates in the above interpretation of her Baptismal Service, I may perhaps be permitted to state also, the corresponding *manner* in which I conceive that Gospel should be preached.

First as to its *letter*.—I do not see how we can preach the *tone* of the Gospel but in the *letter* of the Gospel. The fashion of sinking the expression of Scripture, and of clothing Scripture sense, if it can be so clothed, in a preferable phraseology, is surely, at once, to dishonour God, and to wrong man of his due. It is said, this expression is too strong, this is unnecessarily offensive, and this is intolerable. But are we wiser than God, who, in revealing his truth, has selected each respective term as the most appropriate vehicle of conveying “the mind of the Spirit?” (Rom. viii. 27.) or are we more kindly condescending to human infirmity than God, who, had he chosen it, could have selected terms less offensive to human pride than he has done? If *reformation* is to be substituted for *regeneration*, and if *adoption* and *election* are to be utterly banished from the language of the pulpit, it is but too evident that with the name we shall soon lose the thing; for names are the signs of things, and if you merge the one, experience too evidently proves that you merge the other also. I cannot but think that it is this fashion, even in the Evangelical world, which has been one powerful means both of generating and encouraging a morbid

fastidiousness as to pulpit expression, by which not only has the pure doctrine of grace been deteriorated, but the soul of the sinner perishing in his sins, and of the saint drooping under his infirmities, has been equally wronged of those sweet motives which might have “compelled” the one “to come in” and to repent, and have freed the other from the darkness of doubt, and sent him on his way rejoicing.

Nor here is it foreign from our purpose to remark on the fashionable theological phraseology of our day. Instead of the vernacular language of our times we have substituted that of our forefathers of the Reformation, and retained their *hath* instead of *has*, with a too rigid adherence to the terminations *ed* and *eth* of our verbs, as though we were addressing men in the language of the days of Elizabeth. We have retained a language which is now obsolete in common parlance, and which is offensive to every cultivated ear; so that if we were to address any one in this dialect on any of the ordinary topics of life, they could scarcely refrain from showing their surprise by a smile. Lord Bacon reckons among “the diseases of learning,” “a fondness for the obsolete;” and surely it is as offensive to sound knowledge as it is to just taste and pure simplicity. Our Reformers wrote in “the vulgar tongue:” they adopted the common language of their day: they did not apply to Chaucer for expressions which were then obsolete; nor did they imitate their

cotemporary Spenser, in affecting an antiquated phraseology ; they used the words that were best “understanded of the people,”<sup>1</sup> and which expressed the every-day ideas and commerce of life. And how studiously they excluded what was unlike “the vulgar tongue,” may be seen by any one, who will take the pains to compare the first and second edition of the First Book of the Homilies together. But with their simple sense of Scripture we have lost their simplicity of style ; for what was simplicity in their day is affectation in ours ; and religious truth offered to the people in a language spoken three hundred years since, is like a modern Englishman drest out in the “prodigal hose” of the Court of Elizabeth. The subject of Christianity is sufficiently offensive to the general mind, to call upon us to forbear all unnecessary ground of offence. Blessed be God, Christianity knows no Sanscrit, it has not one language in which to express ideas of heaven, and another to express those of earth : it would that all its blessed truths should be subjects of common language as it would have them to be subjects of common intelligence and common feeling. It would not have one manner of speech for the pulpit, and another for the Change ; but that the language of the pulpit should convey the ideas of the pulpit in the language of the parlour and the kitchen, the court and the cottage, the parliament, the bar, the counting-house, the ware-

<sup>1</sup> Article XXXV.



house, the field, the camp, the ship, that wherever man—immortal man is to be found, all his pursuits may be sanctified, and he may think, and speak, and work upon earth, with one prevailing view to his immortal interests, that he is a child of God, in whose name all engagements are to be undertaken, to whose glory he is to direct them, and in whose blessing he is to expect success. If I comprehend what Christianity means, it is to sanctify man in all his pursuits here, to prepare him for a happy immortality hereafter. But if we throw religion into a mist, we exclude it from common view, and so far remove it from the capability of mixing up with the concerns of ordinary life; and this is to deprive it of its peculiar blessedness, which is even on earth to enable man “to walk with God.” If like the sword of Goliath laid up in the sanctuary, Christianity is only to be displayed to our admiration on feast-days and holidays, let it be wrapt up in a language of its own; but if, like the same sword taken from its resting-place, and found in the hand of David, Christianity is to be a ready weapon in the hand of the man of God, applicable to every purpose of offence or defence in his spiritual course, let its vehicle be the common language of mankind, that it may be applicable to common feelings and common wants. If religion consists in “setting the Lord always before us,” (Psalm xvi. 8.) surely the expression of it cannot be too vernacular.

But you will perhaps say, would you have the Liturgy submitted to this modernizing process? I reply that in the public use of the Liturgy, as a Minister of our Church, I do not conceive myself authorised to change one word for another. I have no authority to exchange *which* for *who*, or *hath* for *has*; and if this liberty were once permitted to the discretion of a Minister, it is not difficult to see, that it might lead to the total depravation of both Liturgy and Scripture. All I claim at present is, to pronounce according to the fashion of the day in which we live, and, that if in reading a modern volume, I should pronounce, “we have err’d and stray’d from thy ways like lost sheep,” I should use the same pronunciation in reading the Bible or the Liturgy. And if you should ask again, would you have our Liturgy and Bible modernized throughout in their phraseology; I reply that common sense requires that they should speak in common language, if they would address the common feelings of mankind. But we are necessarily led, I think, to this conclusion on the subject, that desirable as it might be, to present Christianity both to the eye and ear of the people in its most familiar and intelligible dress, yet that as the Reformers do not live in these times,<sup>1</sup> it is far more prudent to retain our present

<sup>1</sup> I use these words with no invidious reference to the present times; for where during the whole space of time from the first introduction of Christianity into this Island to the present hour, do we find such a six years as those which form-

blessings untouched, than by attempting the improvement of them, to risk their diminution or their loss. But this remark does not apply to modernizing our pronounciation.

To the above I would yet add one or two remarks as to the *manner* of preaching the Gospel. I do not see how it is possible either for the Minister to give, or the people to receive, a sound and full representation of the Gospel from the present mode of preaching. *Topical* preaching, or preaching from texts and detached small portions, containing one or more propositions taken out of their context, and presented nakedly and solitarily to the mind, never can convey either the

ed the reign of Edward the Sixth. It was surely a peculiarly favourable opportunity of Reformation appointed by the providence of the Great Head of the Church, for the special establishment of pure Christianity in this land. The condition and disposition of the chief civil Magistrate were peculiar, the spiritual agents were peculiar for hardihood, piety, station, and both intellectual and spiritual acquirement ; the season was peculiar also. Can we fix on any other term of six years, when such a body of Articles would have been drawn up, and sound Reformation would have been so prudently advanced ? May our day be a day of similar improvement.

The difference between the divines of 1555 and those of 1655 is striking. The one wrote in their closets, and are full of thought—dry, accurate, disquisitive, and scholastic ; the other wrote with the stake before their eyes, full of holy feeling,—racy, popular, experimental and spiritual. Though some exceptions might be mentioned, the above seems to me to be the characteristic difference.

spirit or the meaning of the continuous and un-mutilated letter. Apply this mode of exposition to Butler or Locke, and would the schools be satisfied that these topical hints had conveyed to them the full sense of their authors. How is it possible then, that from one or two detached propositions from the Bible, given to the people one day in seven, the knowledge of the Gospel, as it is variously illustrated in the very copious page of the Holy Volume, should in any intelligible degree be presented to our Congregations? With the best intentions of the Minister, and the most able and most sedulous conduct of his ministry, the Bible thus offered to the people in disjointed and unconnected portions, must leave them very inadequate judges of its contents: not to say that the spirit of the sacred, as well as of every other text, must very considerably evaporate by this interruption of the letter. It may be that partial views of Scripture first originated this topical manner of treating the sacred text; assuredly partial views of the Gospel must be maintained and established by it. What man first approaches the Bible, as an ordained expositor of its truths to a Congregation, that has not acquired from books, or education, or society, some preconceived notions of his own? And however honest his mind may be, he himself may be unaware, with how certain tendency that mind will be led to select those texts which suit its own pre-conceived ideas. And when to this failing of nature we add the

wasting influence of party-spirit, and consider how long the Christian world has been split into parties, and that the mischief has attained such a height, that we hear of Arminian texts and Calvinistic texts,—it is scarcely possible to hope, that the whole truth of Scripture, the precept and the promise, the privilege and the practice, will be preached with that integrity, which the truth demands, and which can give effect to the above interpretation of Baptismal blessings. It is by the continuous exposition of an Epistle, or an integral portion of Scripture that the whole “mind of the Spirit” can be presented to the people. On a particular occasion let an appropriate text be selected; but let the ordinary course of the ministry consist of the well-known portion continually offered to the Church, till the whole counsel of God in that portion is delivered to the people in all its uninterrupted spirit and meaning. The Minister must then attach some sense to the words as they were submitted to consideration in their place and course; it might be an imperfect sense, it might be a partial sense given in a hurried and unequal manner; but it must be some sense; and the people would at least hear the doctrines and precepts of the whole word, at least in the letter and connexion, as it has pleased God to reveal it to man. This would be the most unfavourable view of the subject. But if indeed “a godly-learned” ministry were to adopt this course, whose laborious perseverance would call together

the "Communion of the Saints" daily to prayer in the Church, as our Liturgy provides and expects; and if a short exposition of Scripture were to crown the Service, given, not with preconceived pomp of diction, but the sweet simplicity of familiar intercourse, even as a father teaches his own children, the speaker illustrating the blessed truths as they arose, from his own or his people's experience of their vital efficacy in affording consolation and peace; what a "lively word" would the Scripture then be! how intelligible its truths! how applicable to every man's circumstance and character! how available, by the blessing of the Spirit, to infuse the spirit of Christianity into all the commerce of life! The Bible being thus given in all the continuous integrity of its letter, the Holy Spirit, in answer to prayer, would doubtless honour his own word; and such a "Communion of Saints" would be created and maintained, as would present the Church to the admiration and love of the world; and would again incur the old reproach—"See how these Christians love one another," from obdurate worldliness, or would realise the encouraging promise of general unity and concurrence: "Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also." (Zech. viii. 21.)

But you will say, in addition to great zeal in the Minister, this mode of preaching implies a facility of extemporaneous address in him also. It certainly does; and I must profess my utter



inability to conceive the attainment of this blessed state of constant communion without it. Ever since the reading of Homilies has been discontinued, and written sermons have been habitually introduced, the preaching of the word has been restrained in our Church. Homilies were never intended but as temporary aids for an incompetent ministry,<sup>1</sup> to be laid aside when "these times" which may require such precomposed forms may be superseded by others of greater ministerial efficiency: and written sermons composed *ad unguem* to suit a fastidious taste, which every Minister<sup>1</sup> of the Gospel should, as the bane and plague of his ministry, endeavour rather to correct than to gratify, take up far too much of a Minister's time, and exhaust far too much of his spirit, to enable him to engage, with any hope of permanency, in such a ministry as that recommended above. And is such a ministry to be despaired of because this leading qualification is unattainable? So long as it is the fashion to cry down and discountenance the best exercise of one of God's best gifts to man; and so long as the exercise of this talent is branded with the charge of presumption and enthusiasm, and as almost worse than heresy itself, and is considered as synonymous with dissent, and is the subject of authoritative displeasure,—the prevailing fashion of a day may deem it to be unattainable. But allow me at

<sup>1</sup> See Archbishop Grindal's letter to Queen Elizabeth either in Fuller or Strype.

least to attempt to show, that both the dictates of sound sense, and the best experience, together with the facilities afforded by our admirable Baptismal education, conducted as our Church directs, upon the principles of the above interpretation, combine to prove, that extemporaneous expression in the pulpit is not an excellence of so difficult a character, that its general attainment is wholly to be despaired of.

Upon what principle of common sense then can it be shown that the exercise of one of God's best gifts to man, the power of speech, which enables him to express his ideas with extemporaneous facility, should be excluded from the highest possible office in which that gift can glorify its Giver, —the preaching of the Gospel of mercy to apostate man. Is the tongue of man spell-bound at this day, upon those heavenly subjects, on which David in his day challenged "the best member that" (Psalm cviii. 1.) he had, "awake up my glory;" (Psalm lvii. 8.) and in which when he said, "my heart is glad," he said also, "my glory [my tongue] rejoiceth?" (Psalm xvi. 9.) Senators can express themselves fluently in the legislature, statesmen in the cabinet, lawyers on the bench or at the bar, physicians in a sick room, and all men of all trades and occupations, can deliver their ideas with sufficient fluency on the ordinary topics of human intercourse. Let the labourer in the field have a common idea to express, and he is not usually at a loss for terms in which to convey

it; the same may be said probably of the most uncivilized savage in existence. Till it can be proved then that God, either in nature, or providence, has imposed on the tongue some obstacle to ready religious expression, or has forbidden the use of its extemporaneous exercise by some positive precept in his word, I must take it for granted that the tongue, especially if disciplined to the same, is at least as free and as able to exercise its powers extemporaneously on the subject of religion, as on any other subject which occupies the attention of man.

*Experience* seems also to commend extemporaneous expression in the pulpit. Can you conceive Ignatius, or Polycarp, or Clement of Rome addressing the primitive communions of the saints in precomposed forms of speech? These Apostolic men doubtless endeavoured to retain Apostolic simplicity in the Church by the most simple and natural address of extemporaneous familiarity. Their age of gold was soon succeeded by an iron age of preconceived composition, till the heathen taste of the day, as it has at present, gradually superseded that of genuine simplicity, and the false eloquence of undue refinement, that eloquence which the great Apostle avoided as the bane of Gospel simplicity, found its way into the pulpit, and the prevalence of a declining taste kept pace with that of a declining empire, till plain sense was lost in the confusion of gaudy metaphor, and, with her purity of speech, Christianity lost her purity of

meaning also. This decline, produced by undue concession to the false taste of the world, speedily terminated, as it ever must do, either in a total perversion of the original purpose of the pulpit, or in the complete disuse of its powers. Lying legends occupied its sacred functions, or it was reduced to total silence : and the preached Gospel being suspended, a long night of ignorance and error overspread the Church. Thus sin reigned triumphant, intrenched in imposing circumstances, till at the Reformation, with purity of principle, purity of preaching arose also. The Augustine Monk, with a heart full of holy zeal, could only give vent to this zeal by its most natural mode, extemporaneous expression. This was the necessary habit of the early Reformers ; like the ardent Prophet, the “word” of God “was in” their “heart as a burning fire shut up in” their “bones ;” and “they were” weary with forbearing, and “could not stay.” (Jer. xx. 9.) The written works of our original Reformers are but comparatively few ; and those, in a great measure, composed during their confinement in prison, when their active ministry was suspended. Bradford preached daily in his prison to his fellow-prisoners ; Latimer preached over the country ;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The account given of his preaching in his life prefixed to the edition of his sermons, in 2 vols. 8vo. 1758, is as follows : “He spoke with great freedom : and it not then being the custom for the clergy to write down their sermons, and read them as they do now, to the people, what he spoke on a

and how could Hooper have superintended his two dioceses of Gloucester and Worcester, or have thought that no Bishop could complain at preaching one sermon a day, had he not adopted the habit of extemporaneous preaching?<sup>1</sup> Such was doubtless the custom of the leading ministers of that day;<sup>2</sup> and as the spirit of the Reformation

subject was full of sincerity, and flowed immediately and directly from the heart. All which the reader will find to be truth, from the perusal of his sermons, particularly those preached before King Edward VI."

"1553. On the sixth of July King Edward died. At which time master Latimer was in the country preaching here and there as opportunity and occasion led him, going about, in imitation of the Apostles, strengthening the people every where in the protestant faith and principles." pp. 50, 52.

<sup>1</sup> Hooper is recommended by Edward the Sixth to Cranmer's gracious consideration for consecration to the See of Gloucester among other qualifications for his "ready utterance;" and Fox tells us that he "being bishop of two dioceses, so ruled and guided either of them, and both together, as though he had in charge but one family. No father in his household, no gardener in his garden, nor husbandman in his vineyard, was more or better occupied, than he in his diocese amongst his flock, going about his towns and villages in teaching and preaching to the people there." *Fatners*, v. 16.

I find the following notices on this subject.

Clarke in his life of Collet, Dean of St. Paul's, states that Fitz-James, his Bishop, complained of him to Archbishop Warham, among other things, "for speaking against, such as preached bosom sermons, declaring nothing to the people but what they bring in their papers with them: this

declined, how evidently do we mark that decline in the dry head-work of formal compositions, accurate enough in their statements, but destitute of spiritual life, and wearying the attention by ceaseless divisions and subdivisions. Nor did ex-

the Bishop of London used to do, and therefore took it as spoken against himself, which much irritated him against Dr. Collet."

Holingshed says of Horne, Bishop of Winchester, "This man was learned and eloquent, of a *round and readie utterance*, sound in religion and zealous in the truth." p. 1300.

He says also of Jewell that he was "in his life a most eloquent and diligent preacher." p. 1226.

Of Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, he says, "He preached continuallie upon every holie daie, and did reade most commonlie twice in the weeke, in some one church or other within this citie." p. 1309.

Of Coverdale's first Protestant successor, Alleie, he says, "Upon everie holie daie (for the most part) he preached, and upon the weeke daies he would and did reade a lecture on divinitie." p. 1310.

A difference is made in the two extracts above between preaching and reading, the latter was probably a more familiar and expository kind of address, and of a more extemporaneous character.

This extemporaneous readiness of speaking was cast in the teeth of the Reformers also by their enemies as a reproach. Gardiner says to Sanders on his examination,— "Give us forthwith a direct answer."

"*Sanders.* My Lord, and my Lords all, may it please your Honours to give me leave to answer with deliberation.

*Chancellor.* Leave off your painting and pride of speech ; for such is the fashion of you all, to please yourself in your glorious words. Answer yea, or nay." Fox iii. 113.

Indeed the examinations of the Martyrs, detailed by Fox,



temporaneous preaching cease in our Church, as Archbishop Usher's<sup>1</sup> eighteen sermons preached at Oxford, during the Irish troubles, when he was driven from his country, seem to testify; till this instance of bad taste came in, with many others, in the days of confusion and relaxation which succeeded: nor did it cease even then without a solemn expostulation with the Cambridge Clergy of that day, for omitting that habit which was at least the semblance of a better, the habit of reciting their sermons from memory.<sup>2</sup> And what was

show them to have been men well prepared both with matter and expression.

With declining doctrine, ministerial zeal also declined, and with declining zeal extemporaneous expression in the pulpit seems to have declined also; till in Bishop Hall's time, this custom being branded probably with the charge of Puritanism, it seems to have yielded either to pulpit addresses repeated from memory, or to written compositions; and surely neither the sermons of Bishop Hall, which are extant, nor those of his co-temporaries, abounding indeed in matter, but stiff and formal in their phraseology and arrangement, impress us with the idea that the Church was benefited by this altered style of address.

<sup>1</sup> I am not aware that the Editors who "wrote all these words at his mouth" as he was preaching, and afterwards published them, expressly state this; but the familiar mode of expression, and many terms peculiarly his own, which have all the air of extemporaneous address seem to denote it.

<sup>2</sup> MANDATE OF KING CHARLES THE SECOND.

*Vice Chancellor and Gentlemen,*

Whereas his Majesty is informed that the practice of *reading* sermons is generally taken up by the Preachers

the consequence ? another night of semi-papistical ignorance and error prevailed over the land for nearly another century, till two eminent lights arose out of our Established Church, whose course, though eccentric and disorderly, was accompanied by a burning zeal, to which extemporaneous expression could alone give utterance. And does not this day of improvement, to which their exertions have under God given birth, prove, that extemporaneous expression is generally attainable ? By whom are the thousands and tens of thousands that are the sinews of various charitable efforts annually raised, and the interest of those efforts

before the University and therefore sometimes continued even before himself : his Majesty hath commanded me to signify to you his pleasure that the said practice which took its beginning from the disorders of the late times be wholly laid aside : and that the said Preachers deliver their Sermons, both in Latin and English, by memory without book : as being a way of preaching which his Majesty judgeth most agreeable to the use of all foreign Churches, to the *customs of the University* heretofore, and to the nature and intention of that holy exercise. And that his Majesty's commands in these premises may be duly regarded and observed ; his further pleasure is that the names of all such Ecclesiastical persons as shall continue the present *supine* and sloathful way of preaching be from time to time signified to me by the Vice Chancellor for the time, on pain of his Majesty's displeasure.

MONMOUTH.

Extracted from the Statute Book of the University of Cambridge, page 301. Car. II. Rex.

Buchanan's Sermons, page 66.

maintained, but by both Clergy and Laity, who at each anniversary advocate the cause of charity with extemporaneous zeal? Never has the Church of England, I believe, stood in higher credit with the people, never has Christianity, as professed by all denominations, been presented to them with greater acceptance, than in these annual calls of the public mind to the great subject of charity. And I believe I may add without fear of contradiction, that never have the Clergy of the Church of England been received with greater respect by those who dissent from them in discipline, than on those occasions when extemporaneous addresses have evidenced their ability, their piety, and their zeal. I think then, that I am not assuming too much, when I conclude, that *experience* both past and present, is favourable to the extemporaneous expression of religious truth.

And what admirable facilities to a Parent and a Child who will act consistently with the requisitions of our Baptismal Service, does the education recommended by that Service afford for the attainment of ready expression! "The INFANT" is to be "taught so soon as he is able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession" he made by his Sponsors in his Baptism. To improve this knowledge he is to be called on "to hear sermons." Let him be familiarly questioned as to what he has heard; and this not as a task but a subject of conversation: let him not for many years be asked to write down what he retains, lest the toil and the

difficulty turn hearing into disgust; but let it be a privilege for the Child to be addressed by the Parent on the subject. His answers will be the embryos of future extemporaneous expression. The first link is *attention*, the second *thought*, the third *expression*. If you have not attained the first, the attainment of the two others is hopeless. Familiarity and kindness must engage attention; and the Gospel motive of love be called into ready and continual exercise; and let brevity be especially attended to. It is provided also, that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments "in the vulgar tongue." Let these admirable formularies, be not only imprinted on the memory, but repeated in a familiar and intelligible manner, as though the Child were familiarly conversing in the vulgar tongue, or in the plain common manner of speaking; this is the only mode that I have ever found effectual to break monotonous tone, and to correct the almost constant whine of early childhood. These three presenting respectively all that is to be *believed*, all that is to be *done*, and all that is to be *prayed for*, are in fact a compendium of the Bible, and of all sound divinity; and appear to me to be better taught at meals or at any other time in the way of conversation than in a way of set lessons, and periodical recitation; both as the attention is more easily gained, and as the Child is unconsciously obtaining correctness of expression with increase and correctness of knowledge. And as

the address to the Sponsors enjoins, let the whole education proceed upon this one grand object, "the soul's health," and with knowledge imparted, there will also be an expanding of all the faculties, and a gradual improvement of all their powers, of which the power of correct and ready expression, if attended to, will be a partaker, in common with the rest. If the child be treated merely as a play-thing, a creature merely to be joked with, his powers will be stunted, and as the aim to which they are directed is low, their progress towards useful expansion will be proportionably slow. Treat him as a being of immortal destinies, whose "soul's health" is the great end of his education, and with the grandeur of the aim, every faculty will be found to bear a corresponding direction and improvement. To effect this, as early as his opening powers may permit, let Watts's Hymns be gradually taught him *viva voce*, and let plain and simple pronunciation be early obtained. Let the infantine whine be corrected, by teaching him to pronounce, not according to the verse but according to the sense. As years increase, let him be called on to detail in his own words the parable of the Samaritan, or some fable or historic fact with which he is acquainted: this will be a pleasing exercise of the powers both of his mind and lips. Let him be kindly stopped at sentences imperfectly expressed (and a child will sometimes make three efforts to begin before he succeeds) and told to make another effort, for that

he has not expressed himself correctly because he has not thought correctly. And if the Parent be weary of this pleasing exercise of his influence, let him either propose a subject himself, or permit his children to propose one, and leave them to their own conversation, occasionally interfering with kindness to correct what may be amiss. To this may be added, as one of the most powerful means of ready expression, extemporaneous prayer; in which the Child may very soon begin to convey his confessions, and petitions, and praises to the throne of his heavenly Father. This mode has a vast advantage, as it realises religion to the Child, calls upon him to consider his wants, the privilege of prayer which he enjoys as “a member of Christ, and the child of God,” exhibits God as a merciful Father ever ready to attend to his infant lisplings, and who regards with kindness both his imperfect words and imperfect desires. The pious and sagacious Parent who will daily himself superintend this most engaging exercise of his children’s opening faculties, may hope to derive a rich reward from the gradual increase of their gracious apprehensions, as well as the improvement of their natural powers; and if the knowledge of Scripture, (the Scripture letter, not as taught in secondary representations of it,) accompany this exercise of prayer, the Parent will be often struck, at the Child’s happy facility of applying the Scripture expression to his wants,



and the extemporaneous readiness with which he will offer his petitions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I gladly avail myself of the following remarks of Locke, which seem to me to abound in solid and practical wisdom.—  
“ Perhaps it might not be amiss, to make children, as soon as they are capable of it, often to tell a story of any thing they know ; and to correct at first the most remarkable fault they are guilty of in their way of putting it together. When that fault is cured, then to show them the next, and so on, till one after another, all, at least the gross ones, are mended. When they can tell tales pretty well, then it may be time to make them write them.”—

“ When they understand how to write English with due connexion, propriety, and order, and are pretty well masters of a tolerable narrative style, they may be advanced to writing of letters.”—

“ Had the methods of education been directed to their right ends, one would have thought this so necessary a part could not have been neglected, whilst themes and verses in Latin, of no use at all, were so constantly every where pressed, to the racking of children’s inventions beyond their strength, and hindering their cheerful progress in learning the tongues, by unnatural difficulties. But custom has so ordained it, and who dares disobey? and would it not be very unreasonable to require of a learned country school-master (who has all the tropes and figures in “ Farnaby’s Rhetorick,” at his fingers’ ends,) to teach his scholar to express himself handsomely in English, when it appears to be so little his business or thought, that the boy’s mother (despised, ’tis like, as illiterate for not having read a system of logic and rhetoric,) out-does him in it ?”—

“ To speak or write better Latin than English, may make a man be talked of, but he would find it more to his purpose to express himself well in his own tongue, that he uses every moment, than to have the vain commendation of others for

The Child, thus introduced to his Gospel privileges, will value them more and more daily; and I do not see, but, with ordinary diligence, by fifteen or sixteen years of age, he may have got by heart the whole, or nearly the whole of the New Testament, together with many of the most striking chapters of the Old. A large portion of the Scriptures is commonly acquired by a diligent Sunday School boy, and why is not every child brought up with a view “to his soul’s health,” to be admitted to the same privilege? <sup>1</sup> And if he is

a very insignificant quality. This I find universally neglected, and no care taken any where to improve young men in their own language, that they may thoroughly understand and be masters of it.—

“I am not here speaking against Greek and Latin; I think they ought to be studied, and the Latin at least understood well by every gentleman. But whatever foreign language a young man meddles with, (and the more he knows the better,) that which he should critically study, and labour to get a facility, clearness, and elegance to express himself in, should be his own; and to this purpose he should daily be exercised in it.”—“Some thoughts concerning education.” pp. 340—346.

<sup>1</sup> I look back with real regret on that expenditure of useful talent which distinguished some of my school-companions, and by which, after long and severe application, they were enabled to say by heart a book of Homer or Virgil at a lesson, and that often morning and evening for the space of one week in the year. To how much better purpose had such talent been applied, as well as that of their school-fellows, had the New Testament in the original, or select portions of the Old, been the subject of their attainments!

in that rank of life, that he is intended to receive a liberal education, let facility of expression be one main point attended to in all his exercises. For this purpose let the plan of double translation, recommended by Ascham, and so happily illustrated by him in his education of Queen Elizabeth, be introduced generally into our schools as a daily work: children will not then be learning words but idiom; and with correct idiom in the learned languages, they will at the same time be acquiring the correct idiom of their own. And after they have construed their lessons word for word, let them read over the whole continuously into English. This is an interesting exercise; and will at once give both correctness and facility of expression. And as to write well is commonly the great preparatory to speaking well, let English composition be quite as much attended to as that of Latin; and surely, English prose, which the boy will be wanting every day of his life, may well

How admirable a help had this been to them in their ministry, to which many of them have been called! The experience of one of the chief of our Reformers commends this study. “In thy orchards, (says Ridley in his farewell to Pembroke Hall out of prison) I learned without books, almost all Paul’s Epistles, yea, and I ween, all the Canonical Epistles, save only the Apocalypse. Of which study, although in time a great part did depart from me, yet the sweet smell thereof I trust I shall convey with me into heaven: for the profit thereof I think I have felt in all my life-time ever after.”—Father’s, &c. iv. 45, 46.—Why should not this be a main object at all classical schools?

occupy a large portion of that attention, which is now given to Latin poetry, which he may never think of again after his education is completed. Let him be taught to speak and not to *spout*; the one is natural, the other unnatural: let all display be cautiously avoided; let no declamation,<sup>1</sup> no public recitation, be permitted; by such exhibi-

<sup>1</sup> I consider *declamation* as the true and legitimate child of heathenism. It is excessive and extravagant both in its matter and expression. By the confession of a heathen himself, it is suited to please the raw and easily captivated age of boyhood. And so long as it is inculcated on our youth as a just and approved style of oratory, it is in vain to look for simplicity either in parliament, the bar, or the pulpit.

The great object of a pulpit address is effect:—to convince the understanding and to influence the heart. This effect is the child of sympathy, and sympathy is the child of nature. When *conference* supersedes *declamation* at our schools and colleges, we may hope for a simple style in the pulpit. If a subject were given before-hand, and a class seated round their Tutor, delivering their sentiments on it simply and naturally; the Tutor correcting both sentiment and expression, as occasion might require; I know no one lesson now given, that if well conducted, would so prepare the man for usefulness as this. It is in fact the crown of all other lessons; for every subject might thus be recapitulated, and the mind confirmed in its accurate apprehension of it, while the tongue was accustomed to express it. It is well worth consideration, whether our present mode of instruction is not addressed more to the memory than the mind: the memory may retain the idea generally; but the mind must view it in every shape, and turn it over and over again, to make it its own.

tions more is lost by simplicity than is gained by confidence; and let the whole progress of his attainments be accompanied with the never-failing suggestions, that usefulness is the great end of them all, that they shall all perish in the using, that the truth as it is in Jesus is alone immortal, and that language and all the science that language conveys, is chiefly desirable not for itself, but as it tends to promote every blessing which makes man happy here, and prepares him for heaven hereafter.

With this prevailing reference to the welfare of the soul, as insisted on in Baptism, how excellently furnished would our youth go forth to all the various conditions and relations of life! Their faculties thus trained would bless every station, whether it were the throne, the cabinet, the legislature, the bar, the sick-chamber, commerce, trade, and every occupation to which they might be called. Thus educated, if they were "put into the ministry," (1 Tim. i. 12.) they would be already half-formed for the pulpit: and the candidate for ordination, having passed through the preparatory steps, might be trained, for one or two years, under a laborious Minister of decided piety and prudence, with an especial view to attain ministerial habits and qualifications. One of these should be daily extemporaneous exposition, first in private with the Tutor alone, and then as the facility of expression increases, with the family circle. To these exercises of his extemporaneous address,

might be added other opportunities in the cottages of the poor or in the chambers of the sick ; one of the most difficult, and at the same time most important opportunities of extemporaneous usefulness to which a Minister can be called. It is one for which there may be a prescript form of prayer ; but which, from the ever-fluctuating state of human character can only admit of a very general prescript form of address : indeed, the Service, while it points out the leading subjects of address to the sick, leaves the expression of those subjects in good part to the discretion of the Minister. Thus exercised, his attainments, when admitted to Orders, will receive daily confirmation and growth from the ordinary employment of his powers ; and while in the early time of his ministry he will be acquiring correctness, both of thought and expression, by the composition of one written sermon in the week, his facilities of extemporaneous address will be increasing, by filling up other occasions of preaching with expositions of the Scriptures ; those expositions having been preceded by the necessary study and prayer.

But, with all this preparation, there are two other points especially to be insisted on, to form the accomplished extemporaneous preacher. The first is—THE SUBJECT.

REM, REM, REM—THE SUBJECT, THE SUBJECT, THE SUBJECT ; and that, CHRIST CRUCIFIED, as the only power of God unto salvation, he must be continually reminded of, as the unceasing topic of



his ministry. His person, his offices, his work of complete salvation, himself the depository of all spiritual power, (John xvi. 14, 15.) “the author,” upholder, “finisher of our faith,” (Heb. xii. 2.) the uniting medium between God and man, the source of all grace, whether of electing, calling, justifying, adopting, sanctifying or glorifying, must be the prominent subject of his pulpit addresses. And if he preaches continuously on some integral portion of Scripture, it will force itself on his notice that the whole Scripture is a revelation of Christ. Graces, duties, and privileges, will all find their proper place, and all receive their appropriate mention, as Christ crucified is perseveringly insisted on. Let the preacher’s soul be filled with this subject, and there will be a warmth and animation within, that with God’s blessing, will find its way, by a simple expression to the souls of those he addresses. And it has been the result of my observation of different preachers, that the men who held the most simple views of Christ, as the source of all grace, have been the men, who have spoken of him with the readiest facility, and have recommended him with the sweetest paternal simplicity to the acceptance of their people.

And the reason is evident: for where Christ is, there is love; love in the heart, love in the manner, love in the voice, love in the whole ministry of the word. And love has ever two choice sisters by her side, HUMILITY, and SIMPLICITY. Let love be in every Minister’s heart, and he will not, in

spirit be elevated above his people in a pulpit of privilege : but HUMILITY will bring him down to the same level with them as fellow sinners before one common Father's throne ; and SIMPLICITY, in the sweetest tones of affectionate appeal, will solicit, and intreat, and beseech them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.

The other requisite to form the accomplished extemporaneous preacher is—FAITH. Faith in the peculiar promises made by Christ to his Ministers. Not only faith in the general promise—"Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," (Matt. xxviii. 20.) but also in his particular promise to give them "a mouth and wisdom." (Luke xxi. 15.) It is surely inconsistent in the man who derives his ministerial appointment from the Apostles, to forego his claim to their most blessed privilege, the continual aid of the Spirit in the most engaging exercise of his ministerial function, the preaching of the word of life. Where there is not faith there is either presumption or fear : the former is not the usual impediment to sound extemporaneous preaching, but the latter ; and where there is fear, there must be incompetency ; for the man is not himself. Fear, confirmed by want of habit, and preparatory education, and the apprehended disapprobation of a prevailing fastidious taste, seems to me to be the secret cause of all our written sermons : we are afraid of this defect, and the other inability : whereas grace would afford industry and simplicity

to supply all our defects and inabilities, had we but faith to trust to the promise. Let the Minister of Christ go forth in the strength of his Master. Let this be his motto, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness even of thine only." (Psalm lxxi. 16.) Let him use due means to prepare himself for the occasion; but not anxiously much less *ambitiously*. Let him prefer the praise of God to the praise of men. Let him endeavour to lay by self wholly, and to put on Christ; let this be his prayer in all his previous meditation and preparation: and when he enters the pulpit, let his chief prayer be, the full surrender of self that he "may be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 19.) And though like Moses he may decline the task through fear of incompetency, or like Jeremiah he may excuse himself by saying, "I cannot speak, for I am a child;" yet faith shall derive assurance from the promise made to the retiring prophet, "Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." (Jer. i. 6—8.) Let the Minister be but "a child" in his own esteem, and he will be found "a man of God—thoroughly furnished" (2 Tim. iii. 17.) for the work committed to his charge. Faith will banish fear: new thoughts and illustrations will be suggested as he proceeds, or old combinations and associations

of ideas will be brought forward for present use ; and while the general plan, and much of the filling in of the sermon have been previously prepared, yet he will honour the promise of the Spirit by looking to him for aid, and entertain no doubt that, as his faith is, so shall his support be. And so far shall this ministry be from a lax and jejune exhibition of the word, that it shall be evidently a rich and spiritual repast, by, not the vocal only, but the vital acknowledgment of those who partake of it. The Minister has studied to approve himself to God, and he shall be a workman not ashamed of his work ; neither shall his work be ashamed of him.<sup>1</sup>

But you cannot expect all Ministers to attain this extemporaneous perfection. No, “ all men cannot do all things.” But where is the man who with common talents, and common industry, educated upon this Baptismal reference to “ his soul’s health,” warmed with the love of Christ, desiring the salvation of immortal souls, and supported by faith in the promise, whose piety and zeal may not express themselves in extemporaneous addresses to the Church of Christ ? Men will differ

<sup>1</sup> It is very evident that extemporaneous expression, like any other excellence, must be more or less the result of habit and education ; and were our education for Orders, more decidedly Clerical, as I believe it is in almost every other Church, why should not extemporaneous readiness of expression be cultivated, as well as other necessary qualifications for the most important, as it is the most sacred, of all functions ?

in this as in every other gift whether of body or mind ; but a respectable degree of extemporaneous facility may doubtless be thus acquired by most men, which, when, compared with our present mode of pulpit address, might, with the blessing of the Spirit, by producing livelier sympathies and deeper interest in the souls of men, be productive also of a more spiritual community, than the Church has ever yet witnessed since the days of the Apostles.

And what are the obstacles which oppose this improvement of our pulpit ? They may all be reduced to one ; but for the sake of perspicuity, I will mention two.

The first is, that we are not content with “ a respectable degree of extemporaneous facility ” in the pulpit. A vitiated taste has been generated by our idolatrous regard for classical antiquity ; and our mythological education has insensibly introduced a false refinement, which will not tolerate the simplicity of plain Scripture sense, expressed in plain terms. We are the victims of fastidiousness : and the Church of Christ is pressed down under the weight of this excessive refinement, “ as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” (Amos ii. 13.) A simple style will best express plain things. Parenthesis and circumlocution deprive expression of its edge, and the idea attenuated by frequent trope and figure, arrives at the mind of the hearer, like an arrow spent in its flight, and rather serves to amuse than to impress. But if

“eloquence is vehement simplicity,” how ill is this definition illustrated, by a style of preaching, in which neither matter nor manner are simple; and where is the vehemence which should characterise the earnestness of truth, in one tiresome round of polished period, and in one lengthy sentence succeeding another, impeded by frequent parentheses, and involving one sense within another, till distinctness of idea is lost in multiplicity of words. And if this excessive refinement too commonly vitiates the expression of the pulpit, is not either the unimpassioned, or the falsely impassioned *spouting* and *mouthng* manner of delivery, so frequently learned at our schools, and so unhappily prevalent in most public assemblies, and in the pulpit also, most unfavourable to simplicity? and yet are not these the fashion both of writing and speaking in this our day? How unlike is this to the sweetly familiar mode of address both of our Lord and his Apostles! Let the fastidious Christian world then abate its demands; let it descend from its supercilious height of false refinement. Had it more grace it would have more nature; it would prefer what is simple and natural to what is scholastic and refined. Let our preaching resemble the address of a Father to his children, from his arm chair of paternal authority and kindness; let the language be plain, and the manner approaching that of conversation; let the ordinary expression resemble that of common life, rising into “vehement simplicity,” with



the dignity of its subject, and the importance of its results ; and when the flight is accomplished, let it descend to the level of common parlance, till another rapture elevate it to another flight. How strikingly is this illustrated in the epistles of St. Paul ! and can we believe that if such was the manner of his addresses to the primitive Church, and that he had occasionally been deficient in expression, or had hesitated for a word, that his audience would have reflected on his failure ? Even so let it be at the present day ; let Ministers speak with simplicity, and let their people hear with simplicity ; and extemporaneous addresses will soon be heard from our pulpits. And surely that forbearance may well be expected from a Christian audience towards their Minister, which a heathen Poet was willing to extend to written composition ; he would willingly tolerate those failures which were not merely the result of the frailty of our nature, but even of hasty carelessness. Away then with the sensitive refinement of Greece and Rome ; and in the courts of our Zion, let the simplicity of a heavenly taste, banish the ambitious glitter of a deluded world. “ Excellency of speech,—and enticing words of man’s wisdom,” (1 Cor. ii. 1.) were abjured as means of grace, by the most successful preacher of the Gospel ever yet known ; his ministry stood not in human power, or in the display of human talents, “ but in demonstration of the spirit and of power ” from on high ; and if faith in a cru-

cified Saviour is to be the end of our ministry, as it was of his, it is evident that "no flesh shall glory in his presence," but that the pride of human reason, and the fastidiousness of a scholastic taste must yield to "the simplicity of Christ."

The second obstacle that opposes this improvement of our pulpit is indeed that which includes every other—the spirit of the world.

"The world" will "love his own," (John xv. 19.) and from a "world" which "lieth in wickedness" (1 John v. 19.) what can be expected, but a consistent effort, to defend itself from the intrusion of that truth, which, by convicting it of error, would interrupt its security. Hence it is, that earnestness in every earthly occupation and circumstance is considered as commendable and desirable, but that earnestness in religion is intolerable. A merchant may be earnest in his counting-house, and a tradesman at his counter; a farmer in the field, and a shipman on board; a statesman cannot be too diligent in the cabinet or the legislature; or a lawyer too earnest in urging the claims of his client; but a Minister may be too earnest in the pulpit; for it is his business to call off the attention of men from that world which has their hearts, and to fix it on that world where their hearts are not. This is, I fear, the grand secret of the world's opposition to extemporaneous addresses in the pulpit; they come too home; they speak too plainly;

they have too much of the reality of common life about them, to suit a worldly mind. The Sadducee will not hear them, for they would convince him of his infidelity; the formalist will not hear them, for they show him too plainly that he cannot claim heaven by the merit of his works. To the worldly man they are intolerable, for they rouse him from his delusion, that he can have as much of the world as he will during life, and as much of heaven as he will at his death. The scholar will not bear them, for they are as offensive to his moral as to his classical taste. The Evangelical Christian complains of them, for his pride of heart has been so fostered by the prevalence of fashionable refinement, that he is not aware, how little either his principles or his practice, raise him above the level of the world that surrounds him. Thus it is the domination of a worldly spirit, both within and without the Church, which agrees to proscribe the exercise of one of God's best gifts, in the execution of the most honourable office ever yet bestowed by God upon man. The world has set up a standard of eloquence of its own; no matter how offensive to nature, to sound sense, and to genuine taste. It has one style for the common purposes of life, another for the pulpit; both are equally remote from simplicity. Introduce the civil eloquence of the world into the pulpit, and it will not bear even its own there; for it deems it out of place, as indeed it is. Introduce its own style of minis-

terial eloquence into the pulpit, and didactic orthodoxy, and preceptive morality, and pompous circumlocution, and unimpressive polish of language, and uninteresting monotony, must leave the Christian world in its present state of indifference and supineness; for the effect cannot exceed the measure of its cause.

It is the day of simplicity that we desire; and a simple pulpit will under God produce a simple people. May this be the character of every pulpit throughout the land: a simple tone of Gospel statement like that of the Seventeenth Article, a simple manner, simple language, and simple expression. And surely if as Ministers we gave ourselves wholly to these things; if "the word of Christ" dwelt in us "richly in all wisdom;" (Col. iii. 16.) and if the great subject, CHRIST CRUCIFIED, animated our hearts under prayer, and praise, and meditation, and every fostering means,—the frequent communion held with our people in the church, would be but the periodical discharge of the overflowing of a gracious heart, abounding with the love of God and man,—one unceasing effort, to enjoy, and to impart the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have no doubt that many objections will be urged against that full enjoyment of Christian communion, which our meeting in the Parochial church at least once in the day, would be the means of affording. But let it be remembered that this was the manner of the primitive Church, they continued "daily with one accord in the temple;" (Acts ii.

Such are the modes, My Dear Friend, which I would humbly suggest for carrying the above interpretation of our Baptismal Service into effect. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind of its justice and its excellency—Let him as a Minister show this conviction by his own example—Let him explain it at large, and habitually, from the pulpit—Let frequent appeals be made to Parents and Sponsors and Children on the subject—Let it be insisted on in our schools—Let it be the subject of the Minister's private conversation with his people—Let ignorant Spon-

46.) and also that of the Reformation. These were singular times, it may be said : they were indeed times of singular piety ; and one reason doubtless was, because singular means were resorted to to maintain it. And if a whole Parish (or rather such of them as were able to attend the daily service) consisting of not more than a manageable number, were thus to meet daily in the church, with what comparative ease might it be managed ! The sick, the diseased, the distressed in body and mind, would be reported by their neighbours present to the church, and effectual and instant relief might be administered. Thus also imposition would be detected, vicious habits corrected, and industry and piety encouraged. The Poor's-rate would be soon found unnecessary, in a Parish so ordered ; and charity and justice would go hand in hand together in alleviating human woe, and administering to human necessity. Thus Christianity would be suffered to assert her proper character : for it would be *practically* found that as "the Communion of Saints" was maintained, so every temporal blessing abounded throughout each social circle.

sors be met, by the temperate use of the discretion allowed the Minister in the twenty-ninth canon—Let the Minister educate his own children upon this principle—Let the attention of the Church be especially challenged—Let the improved mode of treating children under this interpretation, operate as a means of its confirmation.—Let new means of explaining this interpretation be provided for children—Let the Church be frequently called upon to take an interest in her young—Let the font be restored to its place—Let the works of the Reformers be again offered to the attention of the public, and that attention be solicited by the institution of a Society for the purpose—Let a Periodical Work be established, for the express purpose of recommending that tone of Christianity which was entertained by the Reformers—And lastly let the Gospel of the Reformation in all its blessed unction, and simplicity, both of language and manner, sound from all our pulpits. Let these means, so far as they are practicable, be carried into active effect in every Parish throughout the land; and may we not hope for the blessing of the Spirit upon them, to produce the happiest condition of man now extant upon earth? The world would then see, what it never yet saw, a community of natural men become a “Communion of Saints,”—the promise of God in his gospel effecting its declared purpose,—the Sacraments producing their proper blessings, as the faith of



the recipient applied them,—and the title of this letter would be fully verified ; for infant-baptism would then be, as the prescribed, so the efficient means, of National Reformation.

And is there a man of piety throughout the land, who would not rejoice in such a condition of human existence? Let him call himself by what name he pleased, Churchman high or low, Dissenter of every profession, could he hope for a more desirable state of things upon earth? Would not this be the mode to remove all scandal, to silence every objection, and to conciliate all dissent? Then let every man of piety join hand, and heart, and prayer, and holy agency in so blessed a cause, and his “labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.”

For do not the signs of these times encourage us to make some grand effort to meet their demands? We live in no ordinary day ; and ordinary means can only defeat our expectations. “Great deeds require great means of enterprize :” and were our Established Church to call all her noble energies into exercise, to act up to her principles, and to renovate her means ; I see not in what respect she would be unequal to the demands of the day. And surely there is ample encouragement to rouse us to exertion : nay, the times have roused us to exertion in spite of ourselves ; and I feel persuaded that by the blessing of God that exertion has acquired such a momentum, that every attempt to impede shall but accelerate its velocity. And

is there not a cause? We are evidently fallen upon the latter days of the world—

“ Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh  
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course  
Over a sinful world.”

The groans of nature are drawing to an end; mind is surely rousing from its long torpor of prejudice and error, and though in many of its developments wild and unprincipled, and in others satanic and infidel, yet Bible truth has evidently attracted its attention, and is gradually consecrating it to God. The nations of the world are listening to the appeals of truth with more favourable ear than hitherto; and increasing means are providing, to meet the energies of an awakened world and to improve them.

The moral advance of society within the last thirty years, even within our own experience, gives encouraging earnest that the next thirty years shall “show” us greater and mightier “things which” (Jer. xxxiii. 3.) we know not; and cannot yet anticipate. By general expectation the twelve hundred and sixty years are even now finished, or shall shortly expire; and the dead bodies of the two witnesses (if they have yet been slain) may be rising in the street, and may soon cast off their sack-cloth. The prayers of the Church during the six thousand years of her pilgrimage are receiving their accomplishment. The world is “remembering” itself, and is preparing

to return to its God, that it may be his people; and the God of mercy is remembering his covenant, and acquitting himself of his promise that he will be their God. In a word, the signs of the times concur in uttering one sound of preparation; and testify that the season is at hand, when a voice shall be heard to which all nations shall attend—COME, FOR “ALL THINGS ARE READY.” (Matt. xxii. 4.)

Let our means be proportioned then to the grandeur of our just expectations; at present they are confessedly unequal. How often have we lamented together the paucity of those who present themselves as missionaries: the waning state of some missions for want of zeal to supply them, and our utter hopelessness that any great missionary work will be accomplished, till Christians act in consistency with their professions; till Parents will propose the ministerial and especially the missionary character as the highest point of human excellence to their children, and teach them, that unreserved devotion of themselves in this work to God, is as infinitely superior to all that rank, and wealth, and station can offer to their aim, as heaven is to earth: that he is the most truly happy man whose life exhibits the nearest conformity to the will of God, and that the man who has been the means of saving one soul, has achieved a work, compared with which, all the temporal success of princes, and legislators, and statesmen, is as nothing.

Here then are means both adequate and ready ; means which carried into effect according to the design of our Church, and that of the great Worthies of the Reformation, would first under God evangelise our own population, and then that of the world. Every facility is afforded us for action : we have no preparatory process to arrange ; all is ready to our hands. The machinery is complete ; we have but to work it. We need no appeals to either spiritual or temporal authority : all this is not only acquired, but according to the constitution of our Church it is imperative on us to carry its Baptismal provisions into effect. What more can be wanting ? We have the promise of God for the basis of our system, the Sacrament of God for the means, the most simple administration of it provided by our Church for our facility, and assured success for our encouragement : all is ready on God's part ; all that is wanting is on ours. Faith, operative faith, faith which is spiritual power, is alone wanting : what the steam is to the engine, the water to the mill, the wind to the sail, such is faith to the Sacrament ; it is the power which sets it in motion. Baptismal Regeneration is the lever which shall renew human society, if faith but apply its hand steadily and unceasingly to the work. God has done his part, the Reformers have done their part ; let us do ours. Let us go forth in the strength of our Master : and however appalling present difficulties may appear, doubtless if on our return he

should ask us, as he did his ministers of old ; “ when I sent you, lacked ye any thing ? ” it shall be our privilege to answer with them—“ nothing.” (Luke xxii. 35.)

Is it the difficulty of the work that discourages us ? Is this view of Baptismal Regeneration so novel in our day, and is the exertion to introduce it practically among our people so vast, as utterly to overwhelm us with despair ? Assuredly experience does by no means warrant me in describing the labours of a ministry in the Church of England as light, or easy to be discharged. We speak of the labours of missionaries,—absence from their home and friends, the dangers of the seas and climate, the error, cruelty, lust, ferocity, obstinacy, and manifold abominations of benighted idolaters which they have to encounter : far be it from me to underrate the real magnitude of these labours ; they are indeed great and terrific. But after all, I doubt much, whether a spiritual Minister in the Church of Christian England, who is pursuing his ministerial course with a steady aim to advance the glory of Christ, and the eternal welfare of never-dying souls, according to the doctrine of “ the Article,” the spirit of the Baptismal Service, and the requisitions of our Church in her Ordination Services, has not full as arduous a duty to perform, as a missionary in any country, except one utterly uncivilized and barbarous. Take any ordinary Parish in city, town, or county of this land ; consider the

common rate of character a Minister has to address: the ignorance, the error, the prejudice, the worldly-mindedness, the selfishness, the fashionable Churchmanship, the proud morality, the prescriptive Christianity, the self-satisfied formality, the loose principles of adherence to the Established Church, the opposition of manifold dissent, in a word, the intractable material he has to deal with, in all its circumstances and conditions—and I doubt whether any modification of society, presents man in a more unfavourable light to receive spiritual impressions, except that of a simply nomade state, than the self-complacent security of nominal Christianity presents in England at this hour. A faithful Minister, it is true, will not have to dread the scalping knife of the Indian, or the kreese of the Malay; but he will but very imperfectly have counted his cost, if he does not calculate upon the necessity of setting “his face like a flint,” (Isaiah l. 7.) to meet the reproaches, the sneers, the insults, the opposition of those whose benefit he seeks, the half-heartedness of professors, the falling off of his original supporters, the cries of methodism, the charges of excess from his Brethren, the discountenance of authority, and the general reprobation of the world from without; and apprehensions, and doubts, and fears, and sorrows, and hesitations from within; add to these the expostulations of unspiritual relatives who cannot appreciate his principles, and perhaps even a suspension of intercourse with those, who are in nature dearest



to his heart, and whom from earliest childhood he has been accustomed to reverence and love. Such trials every decided man of God, who would undertake the ministerial care of a Parish even in this land, according to the requisitions of our Church, must be prepared to expect. The reproach of the cross has no more ceased in England than it has in any spot of earth inhabited by man : human nature however modified by civilization, is the same in every place ; and both the infidel world, the moral world, and the Evangelical world, around us, declare but too plainly, that if a Minister would preach the cross of Christ, he must be prepared to bear it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is but natural to expect as a Minister grows nearer to God in spirituality of soul, and uncompromising ministry of the doctrines of grace, that in that very degree he should recede from human patronage and the regard of man. Politic shrewdness, distinguished scholarship, ministerial tact, and clerical activity in externals, together with orthodox decency in the desk, and a measured earnestness in the pulpit, if even such will be tolerated, must be the sum of excellence in the view of even the orthodox patron whether lay or clerical. Whatever exceeds this measure of externals, must necessarily be deemed excessive, and that in the degree in which it advances towards spirituality. But evangelism is spiritual religion : hence in the degree that the character is evangelical, in that very degree must it be the object of exception to the mere worldly patron. He will make large allowance for immorality or insufficiency of ministerial qualification ; and this though objectionable, forms no impassable bar of exception : but evangelism is intolerable, impassable, and vicious even to exclusion : hence

It is quite evident, My Dear Friend, that we must be first missionaries at home, before we can justly expect men to be raised up as missionaries to be sent abroad. A higher tone of preaching and practice, of ministerial faithfulness, and congregational communion must be found among us at home, before any great success can be looked for from our efforts abroad. And who indeed is sufficient for these things? Who can thus unreservedly devote himself to God? Who can in the spirit of meekness which distinguished his Master, count the cost of the sufferings which must be borne, before the object is attained? Who can endure unkindness that he may illustrate forgiveness, and avail himself of opposition, and contempt, and malignity, to show forth "all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness?" (Col. i. 11.) Who can, not only surrender all hope of worldly preferment, but con-

the spiritual man is more decidedly the object of exclusion with the worldly patron, than the decidedly immoral man. One man may hunt or dance, or even drink or game, but this shall be no bar to his preferment; another may be exemplary in all things, but he is spiritual, and carries things to excess; he is charged therefore with Methodism, Calvinism, or enthusiasm, and this is unpardonable and excommunicable. We owe it to the kind providence of God, that so large a portion of Church patronage is independent: as vested in the State or Corporate influence it must be expected to partake largely of party, or of the world. Hence we cannot but consider the recent throwing open of Corporation patronage, as favourable to the independence of the Church.

tentedly expose himself to distance, to coldness, to reproach, and to exclusion, and enter upon a course never yet faithfully run but with privation, and labour, and sorrow? Who, while he is possessed of a heavenly wisdom which the world cannot know, and engaged in a work on which angels look with wonder, can be patiently esteemed as a fool, a madman, an enthusiast, a hypocrite, and treated as the offscouring of all things by the very world he is endeavouring to benefit? and who, with a steady aim to save the souls of men, can pass unmoved through evil report and good report; and while he is unwarped by the latter, can calmly calculate upon breathing the former as his atmosphere; and rising above irritated feelings, and goading resentments, can consistently illustrate the great distinctive character of the Gospel of Jesus—can “love” his “enemies, bless them that curse” him, “do good to them that hate” him, and when driven by their persevering enmity from every other mode of blessing them, can “pray for them which despitefully use him, and persecute” him? (Matt. v. 44.)

Yes, there is a man who can perform all this; and that is—the man of faith. Not only did our Great Exemplar perform it, but Paul, and Peter, and John, and those eminent men who trod in his steps: the declaration of one was the practice of them all, “and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.” (2 Cor. xii. 15.) It was

faith that made them what they were, it is like precious faith that must make us the same.

Let us then go forth strong in faith. Let our Parishes be undertaken with a missionary devotion of spirit: let our prayer be constant and fervent for a holy courage, for unfailing love, patience, forbearance, humility and zeal; and let a consistent practice of pastoral devotedness exhibit these graces in action; and where is the spot in this or any land, however barbarous or however refined, upon which, by the blessing of God, such a ministry shall not make an impression? Zealous love and persevering patience in the work of the ministry, beget an irresistible weight of character, which eventually bears down all before it. Dispirited by opposition, the ministry of holy Ministers is rather distinguished by passive retirement, than by the aggressive courtesies of a zeal which accepts no denial, and a love which admits no pause, and knows no end but the attainment of its purpose. In heathen lands, missionaries deem it their duty to address all indiscriminately; none high or low, ignorant or learned are excluded from their fearless application. Such is surely the design of our Church in committing the population of a given district to the charge of a particular Minister. The system is beautiful, as it is complete; and when it is animated by a truly missionary spirit in us the Ministers of the Church, what a Church will the Church of England be? Nor do I despair that such a season may arrive. The return of this

morning of light must be gradual ; the change must be slow ; but only let the principles of these letters be applied, and the means carried into practice, and the issue is by no means questionable. Another day of Reformation may be granted to us ; and the Religion of Jesus, abundant in pastoral effort, and rich in the parochial and national " Communion of the Saints," may put forth graces bright as those which adorned the fairest hours of the Reformation, and

" Arise as in that elder time,  
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime."

May God of his infinite mercy, My Dear Friend, hasten that day : may we live to see the reign of the PROMISE ; or be blest in improving the means to advance it. Let our exertions be raised to no common degree of effort, for we are warranted in entertaining large and exalted expectations. It is the reign of the promise that we expect : let Baptismal Regeneration, which is bottomed on the promise, be accepted in faith, and the work of renovation is spiritually and scripturally begun. And as faith honours the promise, so shall all the blessings of the promise be to us, and our children. Our Church shall thus be renewed in holiness ; all its springs and wheels of holy energy shall be set in motion ; union and concurrent effort shall then take place of dissent and distraction ; every order of the State, and every condition of society shall acknowledge its

renovating influence; prayer and spiritual discipline shall abound; the Spirit from on high shall smile in confirmation of the blessings he has produced: the Saviour's honour shall be promoted in the reign of grace, as derived from the promise; and the Father's love shall rejoice in the success of the gospel of his Son. Such a state of blessedness, the Church of England possesses at this hour the means of producing; let us be but true to the means, and God will be true to his promise. And is it too much to say, that the general aspect of the times unites with the promise, in warranting the conclusion, that with the increased application of means we shall witness increased success; till maturing grace shall produce mutual concession, and existing differences being merged in one combined endeavour to improve the means of our Church, the advantages of union under her banners shall be so evident as to induce the general wish—ESTO PERPETUA.

When the millennial day arrives it must be a day of order: now order implies law, law implies administration, and administration on earth implies human agency to effect it. And my soul delights in the heavenly anticipation of that day, when sin being subdued in every heart by the Spirit poured out from on high, union shall be so dear to all, that men shall be seeking, not the things in which they may differ from their fellows, but those in which they may agree. Let this temper but reign, and I have no fears for our Established Church;



for as those within will then most cordially make the largest concessions to accommodate those that are without; so those without will be prepared to accede to the wish of the majority, and cordially yield their differences in favour of those that are within. Let grace but change the temper of our hearts for that of love, and I believe that one year would crown every Christian meeting-house with a steeple.

May God in mercy hasten this day of UNION. PROTESTANTS of whatever name! you have your old POPISH adversary on one side, whom your shouts have roused from his lair: are you prepared for his attack? You have an INFIDEL adversary on the other side, with malignities restless and unabashed, and purposes of extermination, avowed, determined, and desperate.—You have a University in process in the midst of your population which excludes Christianity on principle, and this principle your DISUNION. A MIGHTY CONFLICT is nearer perhaps than we are aware of. Let each ask his conscience—“Am I rising above the littleness of Party? and am I sacrificing unimportant differences to establish that UNION which the interests of our COMMON CHRISTIANITY demand?”

And now, My Dear Friend, I cannot conclude, without thanking the Father of mercies for affording me, as I trust he has done, this view of the possible blessedness of our Church; and yourself as the occasion of recording the sentiments of these letters, and of proposing them to general conside-

ration. I have to thank you under God, for many a sweet hour of holy anticipation, as my frequent prayers have consecrated these pages to God, to the honour of Christ, and to the benefit of our country. That country we both love ; and would fain see it put forth all the spiritual energies, with which God has distinguished it, as a blessing to itself, and that large portion of the world submitted to its controul. And were England true to herself, where is the land, which, though free from the controul of her arms, could be free from the influence of her virtues ? I know well the laborious duties you have to discharge in support of missions ; and the ardour with which you would stir up a missionary spirit at home ; but to gratify your wishes, Semi-heathen must become Christian England, and estimate her own spiritual advantages better, before she can be active in extending them to others. And what reflecting Christian can justly expect either this improved principle or practice so long as our generally depraved education continues ? May God open our eyes to the large spiritual means he has provided for us, in his Baptismal Covenant, to correct this evil ; may faith apply this Sacrament in power ; and in this power may every Parent in the land present his child to the “ Communion of the Saints ” for Baptismal blessings ; and in the perseverance of the same faith consistently educate him as “ a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor ” of his kingdom.

I know not that I can adopt a more appropriate conclusion than the last words of Hollingshed's History.

“ And we beseech God to increase the multitude of loyal subjects, to make them strong in faith towards him, and in love one with another, that the Gospel (which is the doctrine of pacification and obedience) may be glorified in the commonwealth of England, A CORNER OF THE WORLD, O LORD, WHICH THOU HAST SINGLED OUT FOR THE MAGNIFYING OF THY MAJESTY, and whereof we pray thee to give us a daily remembrance : so shall we make conscience of sin, and addict ourselves to the exercises of righteousness. Amen.”

Believe me, My Dear Friend, in the faith, and hope, and love of the Gospel,

Your's most truly

And affectionately,

HENRY BUDD.

*Bridge Street, Blackfriars,  
May 18th, 1827.*

## APPENDIX.

### NOTE A.

IT is with grateful thanksgiving to God that we may now (1839) congratulate the friends of the Establishment on the improved facilities now presented for supplying our population with churches and increased means of Ecclesiastical ministration. The evil to be feared seems to be, that in our plans of external Reform in the provision for our Bishops and their Sees, and the more efficient supply of Ministers and churches for our destitute population, there is so little apparent proceeding on any given system which meets with any probable efficiency the pressing demands of our Church. The blessings of the Establishment must be duly felt to be duly appreciated; and this desirable effect, it is apprehended, will ordinarily be produced in the degree that the Ministers of the Establishment, from the Bishop to the lowest official, are brought into such close and continual contact with the people as to produce the most permanent and the most lively sympathy. All reform therefore which does not propose this as its aim may be considered as short of its due purpose. And it should not be forgotten that the Church and the Country are

assuredly invested with an awful responsibility by God, to improve the present favourable season of reform to the utmost efficiency of which it is capable. The appointment of a Bishop therefore over a population of a million and a half, or a million, or even half a million of people, if Episcopal influence is to be recognised and felt by the Church throughout the Diocese, seems to be by no means an effectual correction of the coldness and distance complained of in our Episcopal superintendence. Were a Bishop appointed over three hundred thousand people, resident in his central Cathedral town, with four Archdeacons and a proportionate number of Rural Deans under them, say five or more under each according to circumstances; two hundred Clergy resident on their respective charges of fifteen hundred each, being the usual compliment of each Diocese—With this machinery, under the preaching of the true and lively word, and zealous and persevering ministrations, there might be some hope that Episcopal and Ministerial sympathy might pervade every Parish and every Diocese throughout the land. More especially if the Ministers and people were called upon duly to observe the Ember weeks in prayer, for the increase of holy Ministers; and such Ministers were periodically and publicly ordained in the Cathedral of the Diocese, the people being thus periodically reminded of the large part they are expected to bear in promoting the success of the Church. I know of no objection to this, or some similar plan, which might not be obviated if an able appeal were made to the piety and prudence and good feeling of the people.

And as to the people at large recognising the bless-

ings of our Church, this also must be expected to take place in the degree that Ministerial sympathy is imparted to them. A population of fifteen hundred people is perhaps the maximum that should be committed to a Minister with any hope of an adequate Ministerial sympathy being maintained. And I confess I see not in what intelligible manner the masses of our dense population are to be sensibly affected with Church order and Church feeling, but as pious young men of our Establishment as District Visitors or Scripture Readers visit with aggressive charity our courts and allies, and by the introductory offer of gratuitously educating the children, under God, prevailing on the parents to hear the word of God in common with their children: thus a Congregation might as it were unconsciously and gradually be gathered out of the most profligate population, and a Church be formed out of the most unpromising materials. When God has thus prospered the labours of such a Timothy, let him be ordained as the Pastor of his own flock, a Parochial district be assigned him, and with the native aid of his flock, the approving zeal of his neighbours, and the general assistance of the Church, doubtless a church would be erected, and thus the Established Church be increased and maintained as its blessings are experienced.

I confess that all the other modes proposed appear to me to be altogether unequal to overtake our spiritually destitute population, and to invest them with the privileges of Churchmen; and in effecting this great work the Pastoral-aid Societies may under God soon become powerful auxiliaries. And if insufficient education be objected to such Ministers, let them be



regarded as Missionaries adapted to the peculiar ministration which the times demand. Let the present condition of our population be distinctly considered ; the people are perishing for lack of knowledge, and they must either continue ignorant, or fly to Dissenters for instruction ; and if the Established Church be the best constituted agency for evangelising the people (as I verily believe it to be) then it is evident that if the Church of England would improve the present opportunity, she must avail herself of such spiritual agents as God in his providence presents to her ; and I conceive that all such irregular attempts to recover the population to Christianity as that of the London City Mission, as they violate the great principle of the Establishment, with whatever present partial good they may be attended, must tend to disorder and confusion, and in the long run, defeat the very purpose for which they are established ; as all dissent from constituted order must do. But alas ! the hasty shortcut means of that importunate zeal which characterises separation from things constituted, because “ I discern certain abuses which I could correct, or could devise something better,” are far more agreeable to our fallen nature than the patient waiting which quietly watches the hour of seasonable correction, and the passive prudence which endures that it may amend without injury.

## B.

The present position of the Dissenters, 1839, however apparently unmeasured and merciless the hostility expressed by too many of them to the Establishment may be, affords the most favourable opportunity for concession perhaps, that God in his providence has presented to the cool wisdom and calculating forbearance of the Church, since the conference at the Savoy. The patience and silent tolerance of Churchmen generally, and the persevering determination of a large body of them still to unite with Dissenters in common objects of piety and charity, must to every unbigoted Dissenter present the Church in a favourable aspect; and with the blessing of God beget a disposition to listen to such overtures of union as these days of reform may suggest. These are confessedly days of reform; God holds us responsible for them; and surely neither Churchman nor Dissenter should be backward in mutually accommodating those differences, which are the scandal of their common Christianity. Let the Established Church then meet the Dissenter in all his reasonable objections, and even prejudices, where she is able; like a considerate mother, let her insist on nothing really indifferent as necessary. The candid Dissenter will then be ashamed in insisting on trifles as grounds of difference on his part, when the Church treats them as they really are, indifferent circumstantial on her part. A timely overture made by the Church to conciliate the Dissenters at this juncture, might be the means of attaching the truly holy portion

of Dissent to the Church, and repair the wrong of St. Bartholomew's day: while the carnal political dregs of Dissent, deprived of the respectability of their holier portion, would sink down into mere radicalism; and thus the solid portion of Dissent being attached to the Church, would give both improvement and permanency to what is good.

### C.

A large volume has lately been written on the subject of "SCHISM," which appears to me to have singularly mystified the subject: a very few passages from Clarke's Lives of some of the most "eminent" of the Puritans, will show that in their opinion "schism" in England, is separation from the Established Church. Of "Master R. Greenham" it is said, "He was a special instrument and means under God to encourage and train up many godly and learned young men in the holy service of Christ, in the work of the ministry: and to restrain, and reduce not a few from errors and schism, striving by all means to retain them in *obedience to the laws of the land*, and to provoke them *highly to prize, and preciouslly to esteem the peace of the Church and people of God.*" (p. 17.) "Master Paul Baines preached sometimes where he might have liberty—the rest of his time he spent in reading, writing, meditation and prayer,—yet did he never so much as consult with himself about his denying his sincerity, and complying with the Bishops" on one hand; but on the other, though "he was indeed all his life often pressed with want,

not having, (as he often complained to his friends,) a place to rest his head in," (p. 29.) yet distressed as he was, he never separated from the Church. Of " Master William Bradshaw " it is said, " And indeed to *Separation* he was ever very adverse, and to withdrawing from the publick places of Assembly, or *from any part of God's worship there used.*" In a sermon preached at Longford, he said, " It is the great mercy of God toward us, that we have no cause to seek the word in deserts and wildernesses, in woods and caves and desolate mountains, but such worthy edifices as these to assemble in, dedicated only to this use. And where God's people have by publick authority such places as these appointed and allowed ordinarily to assemble and meet in, we are foully at least to *suspect those assemblies, and the worship done therein, which forsake those places,* and fly into woods and deserts. It is true, that among the Jews at this time, there was the temple, and besides sundry synagogues answering to these churches of ours ; and which is more, the doors of the pulpits were generally open to Christ himself ; and yet our Saviour often taught in other places ; but this was upon extraordinary occasions, such as seldom or never fall out with us ; and so carried by our Saviour, *that there was no Schism or Separation made by him,* or any of his special Disciples or followers, *from the assemblies then ESTABLISHED.*" And so as to " gestures, and external behaviour " in the church, he says, " It's meet therefore in such cases, that we should not be singular and odd, but conform to the received fashion of the Church," (pp. 73, 74.) So of " Master John Ball," it is recorded, " And he called the ways of separation a labyrinth,

wherein men tire themselves and grow giddy, as in a maze ; but when all is done, there is no way out, but that whereby they entered." (p. 176.) " He much lamented in his prayers before God, the first breakings out of Independency in England, both in respect of the present offence, and the woeful consequences thereof, whereof he was much afraid : yea, he did very often tell his friends, (both in the time of his health and last sickness) that if God should give opportunity and hopes of Church-reformation, that we might be eased of our present grievances, the Brethren of the new Separation would be found to be the greatest obstructors thereof." (p. 178.) And who indeed are the great obstructors to Church-reform but those who rend by schism, what they should correct by an unflinching adherence. It is added, " His remembrance of the history of former separations—and his prudential foresight of the deducts which would necessarily follow from their principles, (viz. Anabaptism, &c.) together with his wise insight into the dispositions of some persons who then appeared therein ; these were the grounds of his foretelling the confusions, the spreading of pernicious errors, and *hindrances of Reformation which we since have sadly suffered under.*" (p. 178.) What but " Anabaptism " and every " &c." every species of error must be the consequence of separation from the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of *Established* truth ? With all these advantages manifold error abounds within the Establishment, but still wilder and grosser error abounds without it. Of " Master Richard Sedgwick " it is said, " He foresaw the ensuing distractions with a grieved heart—his judgment concerning some hath

proved true, asserting often that their principles would not (if they continued in them) suffer them to sit down on this side *Anabaptism*." (p. 187.) Of "Master Robert Balsom" it is recorded, "In which space of time he did much good, as in converting many, so in reducing many that were drawn away by Sectaries." (p. 217.) "Master Julines Herring" would often say, "It is a sin of a high nature, to unchurch a nation at once, and *that this would become the spring of many other fearful errors*; for separation will eat like a gangrene into the heart of godliness. And he did pray, that they who would unchurch others, might not be un-Christianed themselves." (p. 191.) And "because his suspension from preaching was a burthen to his active spirit, and he espied no ground of hope that he should ever be suffered by the Prelates to enjoy his much-desired liberty in England any more—and when every door was barred, and no hope left to enjoy his public liberty, he left the land of his nativity, and on a clear call, went into the Netherlands." (p. 195.)—"This good old non-conformist left the land of his nativity" together with many others similarly circumstanced, conscientiously preferring voluntary exile to being guilty of schism, and openly violating the order of his National Church, however oppressive that order might be to him.

It seems apparent from the above extracts, that there was no doubt what schism meant in the opinion of "These good old Non-Conformists,"—That those who were not "retained in obedience to the law of the land" in Church matters "were guilty of schism,"—that those who did not "highly prize, and preciouslly esteem the peace of the Church, and people of God,"



so as not to separate themselves from the Established Church, &c. were guilty of schism. That not to be “adverse to separation,” or “to withdraw from the public places of assembly, or from any part of God’s worship there used,” is to be guilty of schism; that we are “to suspect those Assemblies, and the worship done therein, which forsake those places—when God’s people have by public authority such places as these [our ordinary churches] appointed and allowed ordinarily to assemble and meet in:” so that to assemble for public worship in any other place is schism. His “teaching” was “so carried by our Saviour, that there was no schism or separation made by him, or any of his special disciples or followers from the Assemblies then *established*.” Modern Separatists therefore, according to this practice, are Schismatics, since unlike “our Saviour and his disciples, they do separate from the Assemblies established;” or from the churches of the Establishment. “He called the ways of separation a labyrinth”—that “when all is done, there is no way out” for “men but that whereby they entered.” They went out of the Church into the labyrinth of Dissent; and if they would extricate themselves from their perplexities there is but one way, and that is to return into that Church from which they have separated. “He much lamented in his prayers before God, the first breakings out of Independency in England;” and that “both in respect of the present offence, and the woeful consequences thereof,” one main evil of which was, that so far from Independency aiding reformation in the Church, if ever “God should give opportunity” of such, “The Brethren of the new separation, [or the Independents]

would be found to be the greatest obstructors thereof.” He foresaw “the deducts [or consequences] which would necessarily follow from their principles (viz. Anabaptism, &c.) and “asserted often that their principles [those of the Independents] would not, if they continued in them suffer them to sit down on this side Anabaptism.” And who but Independents “the Brethren of the new separation, “have brought the Baptism of our Church into contempt, and have induced a large portion of our Evangelical Clergy to doubt of the soundness of our Baptismal Service? So prophetically wise were these “Good old Nonconformists” in anticipating the mischiefs which would arise from Dissent, especially that practical Anabaptism which by reducing our Infant-baptism to a mere form, shorn of the efficacy of the promise, as an “effectual sign of grace,” invades the very principle of our Communion of Saints, and practically unchurches our Church. And therefore their conclusion may be expressed by the declaration of “Master Julines Herring,” who would often say, “It is a sin of a high nature to unchurch a Nation at once; and that this would become the spring of many other fearful errors: for SEPARATION WILLEAT LIKE A GANGRENE INTO THE HEART OF GODLINESS. And he did pray, that they who would unchurch others, might not be *unchristianed* themselves.”

Here then it is evident, First, that these holy men, the fathers of non-conformity, decided that it was “separation” or SCHISM to withdraw from the public places of Assembly, or from any part of God’s worship here used:” for that there was no schism or separation made by our Saviour or any

of his followers from the *assemblies then established.*"

Secondly, that the *Cure of Schism* is not any agreement among separatists and schismatics, *whilst such*, either among themselves or with the Established Church, as the Author of "*Schism*" proposes, and some Evangelical Clergy seem practically to concur with him in proposing, but in returning to that Church from which they have separated; for "when all is done, there is no way out of the labyrinth of separation but that whereby men have entered." The only effectual cure of schism therefore, is to return to the Church; and all attempts to reconcile separatists and schismatics, can only be by a *surrender of that very principle* on which alone solid ecclesiastical union can be founded and maintained.

Thirdly, It is evident that modern Independents can with no justice be identified with these "Good old Non-conformists:" the modern Independent too frequently glorying in his separation from the Established Church; the Non-conformist being "adverse to separation," and declaring, that "separation would eat like a gangrene into the heart of godliness."

Fourthly, That if the principles of adhesion to the Established Church which these "eminent" men held as above be true, then the author of 592 pages entitled "*SCHISM*," a Prize Essay, is in his principles utterly false, he not having once proposed the return and adhesion of the various sects to that Church, from which they have departed as "the cure of Schism," which the Non-conformists held as the most obvious means of cure; but on the contrary, arriving at this conclusion, that "Among Protestant Churches, the

Church of England, as a system, has been pre-eminently chargeable with Schism," pp. 545, 546, and that instead of his Essay being, as entitled by the Adjudicators, "Well-informed, candid, and practical;" it is eminently "ill-informed, uncandid, and impractical." "Ill-informed," as not once touching on the most obvious means of cure as held by the Fathers of Non-conformity themselves—"Uncandid," as not mentioning the capabilities, admitted excellencies, and general adaptation of our Established Church to evangelise the land, if her practice did but correspond with her doctrines and the principles of her establishment, (and which failure in practice now increased and confirmed by Dissent, under a due discipline, admits of correction,) but disallowing her "as a system." "Impractical," as instead of returning to one centre of unity—the Established Church, the corruptions and abuses of which admit of correction, it proposes union on the principle of interminable separation,—by establishing sects to promote union—to unite by dissection, to combine by separation; which is impracticable and absurd.

Fifthly, That the only practicable, wise, and solid mode of union is as the "Good old Nonconformists" propose, not to separate from the Church, but to cleave to her: not to weaken her by increasing her rents or enlarging them, but, by adhering, to amend and correct them. And that for the purpose of this union, Separatists should deem union superior to all rites and ceremonies and externals whatever, and be prepared to surrender all "conscientious convictions" and "conscientious scruples" whatever about mere externals; doubting whether that conscience can be duly

Scripturally, or spiritually informed, that prefers circumstantialia to essentials, or any form or rite whatever to unity and agreement : and that for the same purpose Churchmen should meet the prejudices and opinions of Separatists in all rites and ceremonies, where it may consist with order, not making *indifferent* things *necessary* by positive laws, but making the *rubrics*, such as relate to the ring in marriage, the sign of the cross in baptism, kneeling or sitting at the Lord's table, and even perhaps the appointment of Parents as Sponsors for the sake of peace, *discretionary* rather than *imperative* : that both parties may no longer scandalize our common Christianity by elevating mere trifles and indifferent forms into the importance of essentials ; and that each party may show its readiness to repair the wrong, by the charitable promptitude with which it concedes to the other.

But alas ! what considerate man can hope for the cure of schism if, as at the conference of the Savoy, it is to be founded on syllogisms, or while, as it is to be feared, is too frequently the case, even respectable Separatists, not excluding some Ministers, seldom mention the Established Church with respect, but in connexion with a coarse sneer, or a vulgar joke, or even in public with malignant bitterness, and destructive hostility. These are not the means of relaxing the Churchman from his suspicious distance, and repulsive coldness ; or inducing him to meet with complacency the man who plainly assures him, that instead of uniting with him to correct his waning Establishment, he will do his best to destroy it. Nor does it give to a reflecting mind, any favourable promise of pacification, while, with the concurring voice of Churchman and Dis-

sender, the prize is awarded to an Essay which employs 592 pages of (what some may think) vague and inconclusive statement to decide that, which if the Author had but availed himself of the recorded sentiments of the many “ eminent ” and pious men who have preceded him, might have been easily comprised in a tract of 592 lines : for according to the voice of the Fathers of Non-conformity themselves <sup>1</sup> “ Schism or Separation,” . . . is to “ withdraw from the public places of assembly, or from any part of God’s worship there used ; ” and the cure of it, is to return to that constituted worship, or Established Church, from which men have separated ; for when all is done,” say they, “ there is no way out of the labyrinth of separation but that whereby men have entered.”

We conclude therefore, that, while, as the author recommends, it is the evident duty of both Churchman and Separatist, to cultivate a spirit of kindness and conciliation towards each other, and to concur in every benevolent and charitable effort to benefit our neighbour, and to advance our common Christianity so far as our principles will admit ; yet that as the cure of Schism or Separation, all these must be wholly inefficient, inasmuch as they are at best but palliatives and half-measures ; and however palliated, Schism is still Schism, till the rent is closed, and the Schismatic has returned to the Church from whence he has departed.

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless many of them were “ eminent ” for solid learning, piety, and gifts : the wonder seems to be, how with such sound principles of Churchmanship, they could consistently reconcile the practice of Non-conformity.



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